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ABSTRACT

The material in this book, contributed by teachers in the Los Angeles area, consists of instructional assignments and successful strategies for teaching creative writing at the secondary level. Sample lessons are grouped under broad categories (getting started, writing prose, writing verse, and miscellaneous instructional gambits) and contain ideas applicable to several levels of instruction and of individual student ability. Some of the activity topics are journal writing, creating mood, capturing body language and inflection, using comic strips, story starters, news article into story, man the myth maker, the overhead projector as motivator, an updated Lochinvar, radio script, writing a play, scenes from the theater of the absurd, the human spirit, humorous memoirs, digestive poetry, painting pictures with words, along heroic lines, and lesson on the sonnet. (JM)

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CREATIVE WRITING COOKBOOK

LOS ANGELES CITY SCHOOLS
1975

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CS 203 055

CREATIVE WRITING COOKBOOK

A COLLECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES THAT HAVE ENCOURAGED STUDENTS TO WRITE

AN INSTRUCTIONAL BULLETIN

LOS ANGELES CITY SCHOOLS
Instructional Planning Division
Publication No. SC-729
1975

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FOREWORD

Writing, like cooking, is an art as well as a skill. In writing, artistry is most especially associated with nondiscursive forms, writing which seeks to communicate very personal emotions and ideas through the special genres, e.g., poem, short story, play, essay. Both the experienced writing teacher and the master chef would probably agree that apprentices in either field of endeavor must have preliminary instruction in the necessary skills, frequent and varied opportunities to exercise these skills, and ample feedback (forgive the pun) on their product from the intended consumers. Even granted these provisions, not all students in writing will reach the "artist" stage. But many students will achieve

1. A greater sensitivity to the world around them
2. A heightened awareness of new and traditional forms that will help to shape their ideas and emotions
3. An increased fluency and flexibility in written expression
4. A clearer sense of self and self-worth

These are worthy enough goals for students of creative writing.

The Creative Writing Cookbook was developed in response to requests from teachers and Area directors of instruction. Recent increases in

course enrollment provide another indication of the growing interest in nondiscursive writing. Over the past two years, the number of students enrolled in creative writing classes has doubled at the junior high school level and has grown by a third at the senior high school level. Apparently many young people are highly interested in written self expression.

The exchange of instructional assignments and of successful teaching strategies among teachers of creative writing was initiated several years ago by DAN CHASMAN of Palisades High School, then a consultant to senior high school English teachers, who collected and edited a compilation of lesson plans prepared by participants in a workshop on creative writing. The demand for copies quickly depleted the supply. Because the original mimeographed collection has long been out of print, many of the lesson plans it contained are reprinted in the present publication. The bulk of the recipes, however, are fresh from the classroom.

Last spring teachers of creative writing classes in junior and senior high schools were invited to submit descriptions of examples of activities that have led to imaginative student writing. The individual responses of these teachers constitute the major part of this publication. In keeping with the district policy of decentralization of specific curricular decisions, any suggestion of a discrete set of objectives or of a single organizational structure for the creative writing course has been avoided. The sample lessons are grouped under broad categories since many ideas are applicable to several levels of instruction and of individual student ability. We hope our readers will find this publication useful in implementing special writing courses and strands within the regular English classes.

Special appreciation is extended to the master chefs whose individual recipes contribute flavor and substance to the Creative Writing Cookbook. Each is acknowledged by name on the page where his or her work appears.

ROGER HYNDMAN
Instructional Specialist
English

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SECTION 1

GETTING STARTED

NOTES ON THE CREATIVE WRITING COURSE

JANNIS LIVINGSTON

JAMES MONROE HIGH SCHOOL

The Creative Writing course is divided into three areas of concern. The first is a journal which the students keep each day. They are to write about whatever is on their minds, without attention to sentence structure or other "rule-oriented" considerations. It is hoped that the students will learn to commit their ideas to paper and will feel easier in time about expressing their true feelings on a regular basis. The "creative spirit" is not too dependable, but the craft is.

The second area is that of "sacrificial offerings." Each week, one student records his or her story on ditto masters for the whole class to read and criticize. In this way, the other students learn to criticize for originality, syntax, word use, development, verbosity. Also, this technique will result in the accumulation of an assortment of students' writings by the end of the semester.

The third major area involves the completion of a weekly writing assignment. On the average, a student will produce 17 of these assignments per semester. Suggested topics are assigned in increasing order of difficulty and complexity. The paper must be submitted on Monday. There is a 100-word minimum. Poetry is not acceptable until the second half of the semester to assure that each student can develop an idea in prose form first. (Class members frequently confuse note

taking with writing poetry.)

A typical semester's suggested topics for Mondays might include the following, in the prescribed order: an object, a place (part of town), a person, dialogue, an optional choice, nature, tradition, a fable or fairy tale, science fiction, a satire, a deep theme, an emotional experience, and a project. To complement these weekly assignments, class members will study the works of other writers and special pieces of literature. If they are reading something good, they are encouraged to read it aloud to the class. Frequently, students are asked to read a short story collection by the same author to analyze his or her style.

Assignments produced early in the semester are usually overwritten or flat, but marks are not given. The only criterion is whether the paper is submitted on time. If the student prepares every assignment on time, he or she deserves an "A." At the beginning of the semester, the emphasis is on appeals to the senses and expression of true emotions. These are some examples of assignments:

The students participate in a blind (trust) walk and record their feelings at the end of it.

They write a two-minute stream of consciousness paper on everything their senses perceive.

They write a list of all the colors they can think of in two minutes.

They select one color and tell how it tastes and smells in a free verse exercise on color.

They identify objects by sense of touch only, holding them beneath their desks to guess what they are. (The teacher provides the "bag of tricks" for this activity.) A student writes descriptions, and the class later analyzes how clear the

descriptions are.

For a warmup exercise, class members write all the words they can think of, beginning with a designated letter. ("M" is often used because the words usually include "mother," "man," "money," "me," and "milk.") The exercise shows that students all think similarly.

The students list 10 words quickly after each of the following words: balloon, mother, chair, dog, snake, Kennedy, cactus... The idea is to determine which students will use the same words and which words evoke the same words (stock responses). Non-emotional words tend to evoke different responses. Emotional words show a common social learning pattern.

Hopefully, the students will arrive at the following concepts:

> Words do not mean the same to everyone.
>
> The culture builds certain attitudes toward certain words.
>
> The same old way is not the best way to define the word.
>
> An individual's experience may change the meaning of a word to that person.
>
> Many times, a word is confused with the thing it stands for.

After analyzing the words and their responses, the students are encouraged to write without depending on stock responses.

One assignment that class members enjoy is the "traveling story," which can be used to illustrate the construction of a story and frequently has

hilarious results. The students write descriptions of the opening mood and setting to a story and then fold the paper over so that the writing cannot be seen. They pass their papers to their right and continue with the next section of a story, which concerns the introduction of a character. There need be no continuity; yet the story progresses in formula fashion. The third section is the introduction of a conflict. This section is also folded over before the papers are passed along. The fourth section of the story concerns the choices of action, while the fifth section is a description of the solution of the conflict. (Students are not permitted to use suicides or "waking up" as endings because they are cheap and contrived.) Then, the students read the "whole" story. Surprisingly, the stories often hold together. Also, the students have an opportunity to perceive the construction of a story.

The last part of the course is devoted to philosophy and drama.

The students are responsible for completion of a project as their final week's offering. There have been super 8 films, slide and poetry shows, children's books, collections of poetry and pictures, long stories, plays, and verse dramas.

For the final exam, students draw a slip of paper from a box and create a story based on the character identified on the paper. Class members are limited to stories because students can better show their writing craft when developing a full story instead of haphazard poetic lines. Many of these stories prove to be the best work the students have done, easily qualifying for the school literary magazine that is published each spring.

CREATIVE WRITING PROJECTS

RIVKA SPIGELMAN

BANCROFT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The following are long-range projects that have been used sucessfully in both 8th- and 9th-grade creative writing classes:

Journal: Checked every Monday to determine whether the required four entries for the week have been made and whether the student has used the various forms of writing. The assignment for the semester is considered to be complete when there are 60 entries. The results of this technique have been excellent, even for students who have been generally lax in performing other assignments. The teacher did not write in the journals but made suggestions or commendations orally to each student. (For additional information, refer to next page.)

Notebook: Represents the total work completed during the semester course. Students record in each section examples of the forms of writing that they have learned. Class members are also graded on the basis of their ability to prepare a term paper. (For additional information, refer to page 10.)

PREPARATION OF A JOURNAL

I. Guideline

A. Title each entry.
B. Date each entry.
C. List each entry in the Table of Contents.
D. Use only one side of the sheet.
E. Check and date each form of writing on this page.
F. Decorate cover of Journal with collage.

II. Purposes of Writing a Journal

A. To be a depository for your ideas.
B. To respond to various subjects.
C. To reflect upon your inner thoughts.
D. To keep a record of your plans.
E. To comment on your readings.
F. To note things you observe.
G. To practice various forms of writing.

III. Where Ideas Come From

A. Newspapers
B. Magazines
C. Television
D. Movies

E. Personal experiences
F. Family
G. Friends
H. Observation
I. Books
J. Dreams
K. Music
L. Travel
M. Art
N. Teachers
O. Historic events
P. Hobbies
Q. Holidays
R. Ambitions
S. Sports

IV. Forms of Writing

Use each form at least once. Include montages and collages or other creative arrangements.

A. Dialogue
B. Monologue
C. Narration
D. Play or skit
E. Poetry
F. Letter writing
G. Telegram
H. Song lyrics
I. List
J. Outline
K. Dialect
L. Teen talk
M. Quotations
N. Copy something
O. Description of a picture

P. Comic strip
Q. Sales talk
R. Biography
S. Autobiography
T. Charts
U. Opinion poll
V. News commentary
W. Interview
X. Invitation
Y. Slogan - mottoes
Z. Diagrams

V. Evaluation of the Journal

The evaluation will be based upon:

A. Effort
B. Growth in writing ability
C. Creativity
D. Completeness (4 entries per week; use of each writing form; expression of variety of ideas)

PREPARATION OF A NOTEBOOK

I. Guidelines

A. Submit the notebook in a folder. Write with ink only.
B. Prepare a title page and a table of contents. (You may use the guide below.)
C. Begin section on a new page.
D. Write an example of each form listed.

II. Writing a Story

Include a creative diagram of the six elements of a story. After explaining each of the elements and giving examples, write a complete short story. Check use of each element.

A. Characterization
B. Setting
C. Point of view
D. Plot
E. Theme
F. Style of writing
    1. Personification
    2. Similes
    3. Sensuous descriptions

III. Writing Poetry

Include examples of sound patterns, such as assonance, onomatopoeia, and alliteration.

A. Rhymed verse (quatrain, couplet)
B. Word cinquain
C. Diamond-shaped verse
D. Shaped verse (other forms)
E. Haiku
F. 6-line poem (Love is...)
G. Limerick
H. Free verse

IV. Writing Drama

Write a short play of two scenes, which should include the following:

A. Describing the characters
B. Setting the stage
C. Writing the dialogue

V. Writing for Mass Media

A. Factual news report
B. Editorial
C. Letter to the editor
D. Interview ("Meet the Press")
E. Special features
   1. Sports report

2. Entertainment review
3. Special interest (i.e., fashion, food, advice)

F. Advertisement or report of commercial development

VI. Course Evaluation

In giving constructive criticism:

A. State what you have learned that you did not know before.
B. State what more you would have liked to learn in this course.

JOURNAL WRITING

JUDY POTTHAST

IRVING JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

For students to learn to write, they must write, write, and write. However, after having read Hooked On Books, I decided on asking students to prepare a Journal rather than write formal compositions. The choice of the Journal was appealing because it is graded on the quantity of student writing rather than on use of correct grammar. For seventh- and eight-grade students, I felt that the assignment of writing a Journal needed to be structured at the beginning. For 10 weeks, the students were asked to copy a quotation written each day on the chalkboard and then to react to the quotation by writing or producing pictures. Although they were told that they could write on anything that they chose, few class members did so.

At the end of the 10 weeks, however, I felt the students were ready for the next step, which consisted of following instructions placed on the chalkboard in writing each day's Journal entry. For example, one assignment was to write a pyramid poem, another to write a letter of complaint, and a third to pretend the student was an animal and to describe how he or she felt. Read magazine contains many other excellent suggested topics. The students were again invited to ignore my instructions and to write on any topic they chose. By this time, more students had developed a sense of security, and were more willing

to write on topics that bothered them or which permitted them to express how they felt.

For an especially attractive bulletin board display, try a "Happiness is" theme while students are writing entries in their Journals. After he or she has written the entries, give each student a colored circle to use in recording thoughts to be included in the display. The student may initial the contribution.

The third step does not even need an explanation if the students have just finished reading "Flowers for Algernon." In fact, the students may suggest that they should now begin writing about what they wish. Since some class members may still be having difficulty in getting started, I keep a file box of suggestions for them.

"THE FEEL"

LELAH MCLAUGHLIN

LAWRENCE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Objective: To help students discover that environment is a critical factor in creative writing.

Materials: Equipment that can be used to write with and surfaces that can be written on, cassette and tape, movie film, and movie camera

Method:

1. Ask students to suggest and list on the chalkboard:
   a. Conventional writing equipment and surfaces
   b. Unconventional writing equipment and surfaces
2. Assign students to bring to class one set of unconventional equipment and surfaces.
3. Determine whether students "followed whims" in writing, using unconventional materials.
4. Cover two walls of classroom with brown wrapping paper; instruct students to tack construction paper,

paper towels, paper bags, etc. on other two walls.

5. For two days, ask students to write on "walls" with equipment they brought to class. On second day, request that students take movies of activities.

6. Ask students to dub in sound.

7. Instruct students to analyze why they wrote what they did and to discuss what constitutes environment:

   a. Feel

      (1) Sensory
      (2) Kinesthetic

   b. Kinds of people around them

   c. Past experience as internal environment

FIRST LESSON IN CREATIVE WRITING

RICHARD L. MALOTT

HUGHES JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

I think it is most important that the students feel no threat or inadequacy in writing and that they should feel they CAN write something good with thought and effort. Thus, I try to alleviate the threat or pressure of "writing a poem," etc., perfectly at first and to recognize that, to write, a person must do exactly that. Out of several minutes of "anything" writing, there will be things -- perhaps a phrase -- that are worth developing. Thus, by beginning students with an assignment that absolutely everyone can do with some success, students will be more eager to write other thoughtful beginning assignments. WRITE. WRITE. WRITE.

I begin the lesson by telling the students to do the best they can in the free-association exercise to follow; I ask them to respond to as many as possible of the words, ideas, sounds, and images that I give and not to think too much about them. And I ask them to respond in COLORS -- e.g., What is the color of God? Anger? etc... Then I give them a list of questions orally, such as What color is Fear? A Kiss? This sound? (and I slap a book on the table) Your name? A Pinch? After class members have used a list of 20-25 very different items for association that cover all the senses, I also ask them to use a pattern and to take the items that they responded to (usually they will have responded to almost all

of them) or work with and develop the items further, using this pattern:

God is white.	A boy is brown.
The color of eternity.	The color of a man.

Class members may expand any one of the topics through use of other metaphors and images. Every student responds and is always pleased with SOME of his or her work. The student will have written several things, edited out what he or she doesn't like, and expanded willingly on the preferred items. The student has also been his or her own critic and has followed some of the steps that lead to becoming a "real" writer. I have always found this to be a good beginning assignment, and it works at all levels.

A LESSON ON PRECISE LANGUAGE

JOYCE MUKAI

NIGHTINGALE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Course : Creative Writing or English
Grades : 8-9
Ability Level: Above average
Objective : Student will be able to recognize the importance of using precise, rather than general, verbiage for effective written communication.

Teacher	Class
The purpose of writing is to communicate. Word choice, then, is very important; for, if you choose a wrong or not-too-precise word, your message may not get through.	
Let's pretend I gave Chris written directions on how to find my house: "Go east on Ave. 26, turn right on Broadway, walk a few blocks, and turn left."	You said, "... walk a few blocks." How many is "a few?" You should have been more precise; this one error could cost

Teacher	Class
Why might Chris have a hard time finding my house?	you the accuracy of your message.
Take out a sheet of paper now, and see how well you can take this message: "Draw a flower."	(Students will undoubtedly come up with a wide variety of drawings - different shapes, sizes, etc.)
Very few of you got the right message. I was thinking of this (holding up picture of rose). Why did you draw these other varieties?	You didn't specify; you said "flower," not "rose."
See if this message is clearer: "Draw a 5-petaled flower, each petal measuring about 1" long and ½" in diameter. Draw a 3" stem (no leaves) coming straight down."	(Students' responses should be much more consistent.)
Why did I have more success in conveying my second message?	You were much more careful in word choice, using very precise language. (Inference: Careful, precise wording makes for better writing.)

IMAGINATIVE USE OF LANGUAGE

ROSE MARY SHERIDAN

ROBERT FROST JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Of the creative writing ideas that I have found successful in the classroom, I am including three lesson activities in the imaginative use of language.

Nimbles: Brief form of acrostic poetry

1. Pupils are to write a proper name vertically on their papers.
2. It should be a name of someone they know or of a prominent individual everyone knows.
3. The first word across is always the same as the vertical name.
4. Each word thereafter begins with the respective letter and should describe the topic name as uniquely as possible. For example:

Xerox	Tricia
Exactly	Rarely
Reproduces	Invites
One	Criticism
Xerox	In
	Anything

Figurative Senses: Labeling the sense sources with figurative language

1. Review the five sense sources - eyes, ears, nose, tongue, fingers.

2. Explain figures of speech in writing - simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration, onomatopoeia, hyperbole.

3. Using their power of concentration, the students are to suggest one figurative label for each sense source. For example:

   Eyes -- windows of the mind.
   Nose -- the distant inquirer.

Perceptual Illusion: Imaginative use of description; becoming aware of optical illusions and describing them

1. Pupils select one area of the room upon which they are to concentrate their gaze. (Some clever optical illusions may be demonstrated prior to this activity.)

2. They then narrow the area down to one object or a small area.

3. They stare at it until their imagination sees anything other than what it really is.

4. Students then describe what their imagination sees. For example:

   Looking straight down at the floor, I

observe that parts of the carpet or linoleum become high peaks and others low valleys.

Color, size, dimension, shape all become important areas for description. Descriptions have led to writing poems, sketches, and even short stories.

INTRODUCING SENSORY DETAIL

JOHN YOCKEY

HUGHES JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Objectives:

1. Behavioral: Students will employ visual and tactile sensory detail in several compositional forms.

2. Affective: Students will experience different perceptions of themselves.

Step I

1. After briefly explaining to students the nature of sensory detail, ask students to observe one of their hands closely and to list eight to ten visual details.

2. After the list is developed, ask students to produce a short piece of writing (prose or poetry) in which they imagine the sort of person other than themselves to whom a hand with the visual characteristics which they have enumerated might belong. Ask class members to include some of the details which they have observed as support. For instance, a tough, calloused hand might suggest a bike rider;

long fingers, a musician.

Step II

1. Divide the class into pairs. This may be done either by student choice or by assignment of the teacher, depending upon the maturity of the students. Very shy or reluctant students should be allowed to work by themselves, clasping their own hands as described below.

2. Instruct students to close their eyes (or blindfold them) and to clasp the hand which they described in Step I with their partner. Suggest that they try a number of different hand clasps: gentle, firm, one hand on top of another, arm wrestling clasp, interlocking fingers. While doing so, instruct students to experience and remember the tactile sensations.

3. After three to five minutes of this activity, ask students to list five tactile observations of their partner's hand. Proceed from this list to asking students to write a brief description in which they imagine the sort of person to whom a hand with their partner's tactile characteristics might belong. Encourage class members to ignore what they "really know" about their partners.

Step III

Ask partners to exchange papers. Each student should now have two descriptions -- a description of his or her own hand and the partner's description of his or her own hand. From these, a number of

alternatives are available:

a. Class discussion of differences in individual perception, personal projection, and point of view.

b. An expository writing activity in which students are asked to contrast and compare the different perceptions of the same object.

c. A prose (or poetic) dialogue in which the two views of the hand are personified and the different views which have been evolved are described (using the evolved sensory details).

d. A less structured affective response to the entire experience, based on the concept of seeing, feeling, and knowing.

SECTION 2

WRITING PROSE

CREATING MOOD

KATHRYN LUND

MADISON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Objectives: Primary - The students will recognize that the mood of the author often sets the tone of the composition.
Secondary - The students will learn the meanings of objective, subjective, denotation, connotation, abstract, and concrete and how such terms apply to creative writing.

Procedures: A warm-up exercise requires about 15 minutes. Divide the class into two groups:

Group 1 - Happy, cheerful, confident, optimistic

Group 2 - Sad, bitter, full of self-doubt, pessimistic

Describe the "mood" you wish the members of each group to assume. Talk them into the mood and role-play, if necessary. When the majority of the students in each group have assumed the emotional role assigned, ask each group member to write a description of three objects or pictures in the room, the only stipulation being that

all members of both groups describe the same three things.

Compare the descriptions of the two groups.

Elicit answers to the following questions:

Is the mood of the author evident? Are different types of words used in descriptions (abstract, as opposed to concrete; connotations, as opposed to denotations)?

Is the author objective or subjective? Would the differences have occurred if the mood were real rather than assumed?

Major assignment: Instruct students to write a one - to three-paragraph description of a person, place, event, or object attempting to convey a happy, hopeful, confident mood. Or write a description attempting to convey a sad, bitter, full-of-self-doubt mood. (Poems would be acceptable, too.)

Follow up assignment: Lead a discussion of the problems, discoveries, frustrations, successes, and other by-products described.

IMPROVING DESCRIPTIVE ABILITY

JANNIS LIVINGSTON

MONROE HIGH SCHOOL

Provide the students with an object that may be familiar to them, but ask them to describe the object using only the tactile sense.

This activity could easily be introduced by placing the object in the hand of each student while extended under a desk or table. The student finds that he or she knows what the object is but cannot quite grasp the essence through description. Therefore, the student becomes aware of the need for exactness and of the variety of ways to describe something.

Suggested objects include a hairpin, clothes pin, small plastic flower (the color is often guessed), eyelash curler, garter, small statue, paperweight, rock or shell, pencil, sheet of paper, and ruler.

THE TACTILE SENSE

HELEN HASSELSCHWERT

FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL

Another activity of this type is to place small articles, from household gadgets to precision tools, in a paper bag. Each student, with eyes closed, chooses an article which he or she carefully investigates by touch alone. Keeping the object hidden from the other members of the class, the student writes an extensively detailed description. The descriptions are read orally, and the students attempt to determine what the objects are. This lesson helps the students to recognize the importance of all sensory observation and encourages them to use the vocabulary, especially adjectives, that they have been studying.

SENSE DESCRIPTIONS

PAUL LINKER

HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL

Objective: Students learn to use the senses in writing descriptions, including those that are "beyond" the five basic senses; e.g., balance, hunger, thirst.

Procedures:

1. Read examples of literature to the class that illustrate descriptive use of senses.

2. Present several articles, such as a child's alphabet block, a domino, a pair of dice, a book, a pen, a brick, an engagement ring, a religious symbol.

3. Ask students to describe one of these articles denotatively and connotatively. Emphasize the extended use of sense perception, and encourage class members to use as many senses as possible. Repeat references to a sense perception from different points of view. Combine sense perceptions, such as sight and sound.

4. Instruct students to describe their rooms at home from the point of entering the room and from the position of lying in bed.

LESSONS BASED ON "FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON"

JANNIS LIVINGSTON

MONROE HIGH SCHOOL

One activity would be to instruct students to make individual inkblots and to describe them. Each student may have his or her own inkblot, or the entire class may prepare a single inkblot. Request that class members sprinkle a few drops of ink on a sheet of newsprint and fold it in half. The smearing action of the hand as it smooths the paper will distribute the ink.

An alternate activity would be for class members to select faces of people from advertisements and to write stories about the people, as in the "Thematic Apperception Test" mentioned in "Flowers for Algernon." Instruct students to analyze the levels of language used advantageously by Charlie Gordon and Charles Gordon. This procedure can help students to see how an author creates a character.

Thematically, the story says something different to each student. Request that class members find quotes that express a theme and note how many divergent messages might be gleaned from this "universal" story.

INKSPOTS AND DREAMS

DOLORES WOOD

CHATSWORTH HIGH SCHOOL

Students seem to enjoy writing materials with a psychologically-based motivation. Two such devices used successfully are:

1. The inkblot assignment: For this activity, I asked an art student to create 40 blots in multi-colored hues (more interesting than black and white). Each student took one inkblot and wrote a descriptive paragraph about what he or she saw in it. Class members then exchanged blots, and each wrote three descriptions. The blots were coded with a number placed on the reverse side of the paper. Later, some blots were projected on a screen, and students who had described blots with corresponding numbers read their papers aloud. They were fascinated to hear the great variety of descriptions that can be based on an abstract drawing.

2. Dream assignment: Class members should be allowed several weeks to complete this open-ended assignment. Students jot down immediately on awaking all they can recall of a dream they had; they are urged to note color (if any) and any of the five

senses they experienced during the dream. This activity heightens powers of observation.

CAPTURING BODY LANGUAGE AND INFLECTION

PAUL CONNOLLY

HUNTINGTON PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Objective: The student will be able to demonstrate his or her ability to recognize and describe the intonations and facial expressions that accompany different types of remarks.

Motivation: In written language, it is more difficult to convey intonation, facial expression, and gesture than it is in spoken language. Yet all these devices convey meaning and must be described in writing.

Activity: Describe the appropriate facial expression, intonation, and gestures for several responses in communicating with a dear friend, a casual stranger, and an inquiring police officer.

1. "How did you get to the airport?" "In a taxi."
2. "Where did you get that camera?" "A Christmas present."

3. "Where are you going?"
"Palm Springs."

Evaluation:

1. Did the student understand the assignment? It may be necessary to act out one or two examples. Let the student describe the model.

2. Was the student's work concrete? Did it demonstrate the actions of the respondent? I do not want a one-word description, e.g., "In a taxi," she replied laconically.

WRITING FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

DAN CHASMAN

PALISADES HIGH SCHOOL

The following assignments are effective beginning activities because they involve the students with themselves. This is the subject about which I find they write best, and the activities provide valuable information about student backgrounds and attitudes.

1. Ask the class members to clear their desks, except for a pencil and a sheet of paper. Then have them close their eyes and try to remember as much as they can about their kindergarten experience. Help the students by asking them to recall the house in which they lived, their room, their pets, their friends, their neighborhood, the walk or ride to school, their first day in kindergarten, their teacher, his or her name, what s/he looked like, the smell in the room (paste, dusty floor mats, construction paper), nap time, being scolded for talking, building with blocks, having someone knock down their construction, the playground, the rush for their favorite equipment (swings, jungle gym, etc.), the awe they felt in the presence of older children in the school.

   Give class members plenty of time to conjure up images after each "Do you remember?" Then ask the students to talk about the impressions that are most vivid to them. Their eyes should be

closed all this time. When they start running out of ideas, ask students to open their eyes and write anything that comes into their minds. Tell them not to worry about sentence structure, punctuation, spelling, but just write as fast as the thoughts flow. This entire activity usually takes 20 to 30 minutes. Spend the remainder of the period having students read their papers. Do not collect them, but ask everyone to try to capture some strong feeling or incident that has emerged from this experience in a well-developed, polished narrative, interior monologue, or dialogue.

2. Ask the class members to recall an experience that had an especially strong impact on them, that may in some way have affected their lives in a significant manner, and that may have been a turning point. This may have been a family disagreement; a move; some unfair treatment by a parent, teacher or other authority figure; rejection by a friend; doing or saying something they later regretted; or receiving praise or recognition or reward for a job well done. Ask the students to write about this experience, trying to include all the important incidents surrounding it, but especially trying to capture the feelings that the experience evoked.

3. Ask the class members to create a family sculpture. "Imagine each member of your family 'frozen' in a characteristic pose." The entire work must show not only the individual characters but also the relationships among them. The qualities of the people, the way they feel about each other, and the way the student feels about them may be suggested by the setting

in which each student's sculpture is placed and by the materials with which each member of the family is constructed. Each figure should be made of some substance that in some way represents him or her; the materials need not be the conventional ones of wood, stone, and metal. The overall size of the sculpture, the relative sizes of the individual figures, and the position of each character in relation to the others may also be indicative of the student's feeling.

Ask for volunteers to pose other students as members of their families and thus create living models of their sculpture. Have them discuss the materials of which each character would be made. (I've had students use cotton candy, jello, rusty car parts, computers, foam rubber encased in steel, and granite smeared over with a thick coat of marshmallows. The possibilities are endless.) Then ask class members to explain the relationships and feelings flowing from one person to another. (How much of a psychotherapy session this becomes depends on how you handle this part of the lesson. I suggest caution. It can get pretty heavy.) Finally, ask the students to write a detailed description of their creation without interpreting what they've done. The objective is for the reader to "see" the sculpture and draw his or her own conclusions about what it means. This assignment presents interesting problems of organization, which you should discuss before the students begin to write.

CARTOON FUN

FERN DEAN

ALFRED NOBEL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The best teaching strategy for an initial assignment in creative writing that I have found is one I call "Cartoon Fun."

Materials: Five jigsaw puzzles that consist of approximately 50 pieces each. (I purchased elementary puzzles: Goofy, Goldylocks and the Three Bears, Snow White, Heckle and Jeckle, and Dudley Do-Right.)

Five blankets.

Saran wrap.

Activity: Move desks back, and spread blankets on floor. Place students in groups of 4-5-6, based upon the size of class. Each group works on putting a puzzle together (five groups). Display the first three puzzles to be completed on the bulletin board. They should be covered in clear plastic wrap and thumbtacked to the board.

Assignment: Ask students to write a story using any one or a combination of the cartoon characters without copying the story that the puzzle represents. The story must be short and contain a plot and a theme that can be identified by the reader.

I play a name game to know my students by their first names before I begin the activity. This assignment allows the class members to enjoy themselves and shows me what they can do without instruction concerning plot, theme, or creative writing.

USING COMIC STRIPS

GARON GARRETT

BERENDO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Objective: The average student will be able to write a story in his or her own words while the teacher provides some of the ideas that are needed.

Students:

1. List comic-strip characters (a dispatch).
2. Watch a five- to ten-slide series of comic-strip frames. If asked to do so, a student reads it aloud.
3. Choose parts and read the strip like a play.
4. Draw a favorite character while the teacher operates the projector on request.
5. Tell the story in their own words, orally at first, if possible. Each slide must be described in a 25-word paragraph. Each paragraph must make the characters speak (a quotation of any kind). An added paragraph is used to generalize or express a main thought from the story.

6. Decide whether the last paragraph should be first.

7. Write similar stories on their own.

Teacher:

1. Photographs the individual frames of any comic strip of a simple nature, particularly if it teaches a lesson. If the strip is too long, the frame of inconvenient size, or the idea too slowly developed, more than one frame can be placed on one slide.

2. Develops enthusiasm for the idea by telling comic stories, attempting to draw Goofy or Charlie Brown on the chalkboard, or showing several strips before introducing the strip chosen for the assignment.

3. Reviews the final strip several times, encouraging students to think about what is going on -- and what is <u>really</u> going on inside the head and heart and out.

4. Emphasizes the importance of generalizing the last paragraph and whether that should come first or last.

5. Encourages students to create their own stories in a sequence of actions in the brief time span portrayed in the comic strip.

Materials: Film, reversible-sequence slide projector, paper, and pencil.

Time: The length of the exercise may vary from one day to a week or more.

PICTURE STORIES*

DON WULFFSON

SAN FERNANDO HIGH SCHOOL

Several years ago, two students in my Creative Writing class created, of their own volition, a picture story about "a guy named Friz." It consisted of a sequence of frames, each of which was accompanied by a caption or commentary. I was excited about what the students had done and wanted to find some way to motivate other class members to create stories of the same kind. Over the years, by trial and error, I have put together a sequence of activities that achieved what I was after, not only with above-average, obviously creative students, but also with below-average, seemingly uncreative students.

The sequence: 1) The student reads a picture story and then talks about it and answers a few questions. 2) He or she is given an opportunity to write an original picture story. The task is structured and simplified to insure as much success as possible. 3) The student is given the opportunity to write a wholly original picture story. He or she is encouraged to experiment with the medium and to let creativity lead where it will.

*This summary of a suggested activity is based upon a sequence presented by Mr. Wulffson in Creative English, a copyrighted, three-volume series; the summary is reproduced with the permission of the author.

In itself, picture-story writing is an exciting activity for students. But more, it can be a great starting point in teaching a developmental unit in story writing. It gets such a unit off to a fast and fun-filled start. It provides most students with a successful first experience in story telling, giving them the confidence and desire to try "new things," and it gives class members a simple and graphic understanding of how to get a story started and to develop it toward some kind of meaningful conclusion.

PUTTING THE PUZZLE TOGETHER

JOAN MARTIN

HUGHES JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

This is a very simple lesson, but it is especially effective in Grade 7 since students at this level are receptive to participating in a puzzle or mystery game.

First Day: Assign the following for homework without a detailed explanation:

On your way home today, notice one thing you have never noticed before. Perhaps it will be a milk carton in the gutter, a broken street sign, a shade pulled down, or an oil slick on the driveway. Write one explanatory statement.

Second Day: On the next day, ask the students to notice one person they have not noticed before.

Write two statements about this person. The first statement should be a physical description, and the second should be a revelation of the mood of the person.

Third Day: Ask class members to notice a place they have not noticed before. Perhaps it will be a particular house, corner, lot, or garage.

Write one statement describing the place.

Fourth Day: Instruct the students to decide at what time they will step out-of-doors. This might be at 8:15 p.m., 3:00 p.m., or 6:00 a.m.

Write a statement concerning the time and the weather. Is it rainy, foggy, clear, overcast, dark, or bright?

Each student now has a setting, a time, a main character, an object of conflict, and a mood. With this combination, the student can connect unrelated "real" things into a highly imaginative story.

Students are surprised at what they do not "see," even when they follow the same route each day. They are also delighted with the "trick" you have played on them and are enthusiastic about putting their individual puzzles together.

BUILDING A NARRATIVE

LARRY FRITZGERALD

JORDAN HIGH SCHOOL

The following lessons are part of a series I use in Creative Writing when conducting a unit on the short story. Taught as a whole, the series gives the students a chance to experiment with the basic elements of narrative fiction. Furthermore, each new lesson helps the students to expand and build upon the skills acquired in the previous ones. These three examples demonstrate the basic format of each lesson and show how one lesson might progress into the next.

LESSON I -- CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Preparation: From old magazines, cut out 10 to 20 pictures of people and display them in the classroom. Choices that seem to work the best are close-ups that highlight outstanding physical features and suggest some emotional situation. Try to find large pictures of just one person.

In Class: Read examples of character descriptions from several of your favorite authors. Discuss the techniques

these writers use to create characters. Point out that they emphasize what the character is like rather than what he or she looks like and that it is more realistic to have a character doing or saying things that demonstrate his or her personality.

Assignment: Ask students to choose several of the pictures that you have displayed. For each one, instruct class members to write the opening paragraph or two of a short story in which the person shown in the picture is the main character. In these opening paragraphs, the students are to describe in writing the person and situation suggested by the picture.

LESSON II - SETTINGS

Preparation: Again, use pictures from magazines. This time, concentrate on a variety of scenes showing views of such subjects as cities, ruins, caves, and moonscapes. Further, select scenes that are as devoid of people as possible.

In Class: Read examples of setting descriptions from published works. Discuss the techniques that these demonstrate.

In your discussion, be sure to point out how the writers use all of the senses, not just sight, to make the settings realistic.

Assignment: Once more, instruct the students to choose a number of pictures as stimuli. Then, building on Lesson #1, ask class members to write story openings in which they describe a scene based on the picture and create characters to inhabit it.

LESSON III - WRITING WITH EMOTIONAL APPEAL

Preparation: In this assignment, note that the student should rely entirely upon his or her own imagination for characters, settings, etc.

In Class: Begin a class discussion with a question like "What does beautiful mean?" or "What is meant by nice?" Point out how many students stop after stating that a particular scene or person is "beautiful." Explain how this is a rather empty and subjective observation. Go on to a discussion of connotative language. Show how a descriptive passage may include details and, at the same time, convey an emotional feeling.

Assignment: Request that class members list basic emotions (e.g., love, hate, surprise, etc.). Suggest a few of your own that may not be so obvious (frustration, respect, etc.). Using the skills learned in previous assignment, the students create characters, scenes, and/or situations that portray one of the emotions they have chosen. The only requirement is that students may not use the word they have chosen in the paper.

STORY STARTERS

JEWELL PETERSON

MADISON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

LESSON I

Objective: To devise a description of a relationship among three objects in story form

Grade-level ability: All

Procedures: The teacher asks members of the class to name three objects, such as a bright scarf, a belt, or an old tennis shoe. The objects should be something the student is wearing or carrying that day in class. This is a good opportunity to choose an object that is volunteered by a student who seldom participates in class discussion.

The three objects are briefly discussed for sensory values: sight, smell, sound, etc. A few questions should lead into consideration of possible uses of the objects.

Instruction to students: Write a short story in which these three objects are important.

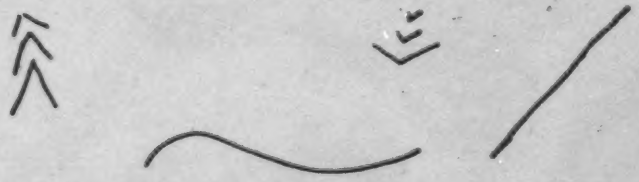
Comment: The result of this activity is that students often write a mystery. If desired, the assignment could be to write a mystery.

LESSON II

Objective: The student will write about what he or she is unconsciously thinking.

Grade-level ability: All

Procedures: Each student is given a page on which the following symbols are placed at random. If such a page cannot be dittoed, the symbols may be placed on the chalkboard with the instruction that they be recorded anywhere on a blank sheet of paper.



Ask the students to add as many lines as they wish to the four "symbols." When the students have a picture that is pleasing, they should write a story about it.

Comment: This assignment has always been successful, and the results tend to be sophisticated. The "symbols" seem to give enough structure to cause a picture to evolve. Writing a story about an individual picture seems to follow easily.

FOUR WARM-UPS FOR SHORT STORY WRITING

SANDRA KRIST

UNIVERSITY CONTINUATION HIGH SCHOOL

LESSON I

Objective: To give students an opportunity to differentiate between objective and subjective "style" in writing.

Assignment: Provide each student with a picture cut out from a magazine. Attempt to find magnified or close up views of such subjects as a grimy hand, a piece of bread, or a glass of overflowing water. Students write an objective description of the object with attention to size, shape, and the relationship of the parts of objects to other parts. They should avoid subjective references. Next, class members should write a subjective description of the same object, attempting to achieve a pre-determined tone with choice of descriptive words. Actual objects might be substituted for the pictures. Read the best examples of student work to the class. Ask students to identify the tone in their subjective descriptions.

LESSON II

Objective: To give students practice in writing from different literary points of view.

Assignment: First explain the literary point of view with such terms as omniscient, limited ominiscient, objective, and first-person narrator. Students then write a short dialogue involving an argument among three persons. They should write this dialogue four times, each time from a different point of view.

LESSON III

Objective: To give students practice in writing plots.

Assignment: Read a short story to the class and stop at a point before the climax. Students complete the story, either by writing a brief plot summary or by writing the rest of the story in detail, including action and dialogue. Stories by Edgar Allen Poe offer good examples.

LESSON IV

Objective: To give students practice in writing plots.

Assignment: Students listen for snatches of conversation in the halls at school. They should collect three or four different one-line comments. Then they should write a plot summary of a story that is suggested by one of the lines. The class members might share all of their lines so that the selection will be broader. The teacher might also supply a list instead of asking students to gather their own examples.

FROM SENSE TO STORY

G. L. PRYOR

PORTOLA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Several assignments are used at the beginning of my Creative Writing course to motivate students to begin writing.

1. Distribute copies of Effective Expression I. (See page 62.) Before students begin classifying the terms in the "List of Descriptive Words," write student suggestions on the chalkboard for each sense and instruct class members to copy them.

   Students should also write the descriptive words from the list under the "sense" that they believe is most appropriate.

2. Distribute copies of Effective Expression II. (See page 64.) Instruct students to use their lists of descriptive words and any other suitable words to describe the objects that are classified under the respective headings.

3. Use ditto copies of "Making Words Into Comparisons" for reference in explaining similes and to encourage students to begin

writing similes of their own.

4. Request that students write five original similes, one to appeal to each of the five senses.

   a. Divide class into five groups after students have written their similes. Ask each group to select its best simile for each sense.

   b. Ask students to read the "best" similes from their respective groups to the class. Instruct class members to select the two best similes.

5. For a final assignment, instruct students to write an original short story; require that it contain an original simile.

EFFECTIVE EXPRESSION I

To write well, you need to develop the ability to describe a scene or "happening" vividly. To do so, you need to use expressive or descriptive words that portray a vivid sense of what you're writing about. We take in the world around us through use of the five senses; each of which has a number of words that vividly portray that sense.

The five senses are listed below, and on the next page are examples of words that vividly convey one of these senses. Review this list, and decide which of the five senses each word would best describe. Write this word under the appropriate heading. Some words may apply to more than one sense; try to decide which sense fits the best.

Smell:

Touch:

Taste:

Sight:

Sound:

List of Descriptive Words

acrid
magenta
garnet
neigh
musty
fishy
babble
half-transparent
pungent
bronzed
sharp
croak
lucid
palatable
moist
whine
amethyst
earthy
sour
gurgle
alabaster
cerise
sweet
digestible
delicate
chatter
topaz
sable
smoky
sickening
elemental
piquant
beige
murmur
stench
ultramarine
savor
heliotrope

tang
bellow
iridescent
rancid
cloying
repellent
opalescent
penetrating
thundering
sensual
astringency
blanched
tonic
tantalizing
tart
pallid
patters
spicy
twang
mauve
oily
suffocating
falsetto
variegated
canary
fetid
querulous
limp
tawny
hoots
gaseous
gritty
emerald
flecked
metallic
snapping
woody
sticky

sulphuric	jet
moaned	cooing
mellow	full-flavored
azure	saline
rustle	slimy
prickly	smooth
buff	

EFFECTIVE EXPRESSION II

1. Taste: List five descriptive words that describe the predominant taste of each of the following:

   a. Honey

   b. Vinegar

   c. Peppermint

   d. Olives

   e. Cheddar cheese

   f. A lemon

   g. Custard

   h. Sauerkraut

   i. A banana

   j. Root beer

2. Touch: List three words that describe the predominant tactile sensation you experience when you touch each of the following:

a. Satin

b. A porcupine quill

c. An oyster

d. Sandpaper

e. Molasses

f. Molten lead

g. Sherbet

h. Sand

i. A rubber ball

j. Clay

3. Sound: Complete each of the following sentences with a word suggesting sound:

a. The sick puppy _____ for its mother.

b. The frightened hens _____.

c. The fire _____ up the chimney.

d. The _____ of brass cymbals fell upon our ears.

e. The _____ of crisp paper is

sometimes audible through the microphone.

f. The fog horn _____ throughout the night.

g. The ice cubes _____ in the pitcher.

h. We heard the _____ of fire sirens in the distance.

i. The silence was broken only by the _____ of the hounds.

4. Sight: List five words suggestive of each of the following colors:

a. Red

b. Yellow

c. Green

d. Blue

e. Violet

f. Multicolored

g. White

h. Black

i. Spotted

5. Smell: List five words that might be used in describing the smell of each of the following:

a. Limburger cheese

b. A campfire

c. Old books

d. Cigarette smoke

e. Warm gingerbread

f. Pine woods

g. Moth balls

h. Goldfish

i. Frying bacon

j. A tuberose

MAKING WORDS INTO COMPARISONS

A simile is introduced by the words like or as. It is used to compare two things that differ in most ways but which are strikingly alike in some way: "Tom's face was red as a beet."

Read each unfinished sentence below. Then read the numbered parts of sentences to the right. Write in the blank space the number of the part that best completes each simile.

Leaves drifted down from the maple tree like _____.

The frisky puppy was as hard to catch as _____.

Yesterday's quiet brook now roars like _____.

The chattering starlings were as noisy as _____.

The king's men cut down the enemy like _____.

1. a great waterfall.
2. children at recess.
3. a slippery eel.
4. a field of hay.
5. tiny parachutes.

He approached silently, picking his way like _____.

From the plane the cars on the road looked like _____.

Raindrops on the grass sparkled like _____.

His voice was as monotonous as _____.

The steak was as tough as _____.

1. shoe leather.
2. a buzz saw.
3. a wary cat
4. diamonds.
5. crawling bugs.

Steady rain beating on the roof sounded like ____.

The March wind swept the street as briskly as _____.

Grandfather's snore buzzed now and then like _____.

In the porch swing, Claude swayed as lazily as _____.

The old man's face had as many wrinkles as _____.

1. a drifting canoe.
2. a withered apple.
3. a broom
4. tap dancers.
5. a motorboat.

Complete each of these sentences with as many similes as you can:

Flames crawled across the roof like _____.

_____.

_____.

Cold and damp, the room was as uncomfortable as _____.

_____.

_____.

Complete these similes by filling in the blanks:

1. The large, staring blue eyes of the stern old general were like a _____.
2. She was in love. Her heart was fluttering like a _____.
3. She is as unresponsible as a _____.
4. Their team came onto the field like a _____.
5. She was as tall as _____.
6. School can be as hard as _____.
7. Her hair was like _____.
8. The room smelled like _____.
9. The cool spray of water felt like _____.

Supply the first part of these similes using the following phrases as the last part:

1. like a clenched fist
2. like wounded men
3. like a military procession
4. like shining gold
5. as swift as a jet
6. as slippery as oil

Now write five of your own original sentences containing similes.

TEASER ASSIGNMENT

DOLORES WOOD

CHATSWORTH HIGH SCHOOL

Students clip from magazines examples of either fiction or non-fiction teasers, the taglines used on the opening page of a story near the illustration or directly under the title to attract the reader. On the reverse side, each should be identified with the name of the magazine, the date, and the title of the original story.

Each student may bring his or her own examples to class although it is preferable to exchange taglines or use a grab-bag approach. Students then read their selections and write some type of story or article which they feel the teaser would exemplify. It is sometimes valuable for the student to read the original material after he or she has completed the assignment to see how the same teaser can be used for a different plot development.

Sometimes all students are given the same teaser, providing that an excellent example can be found. Stories are read in class so that students may observe how a plot line can take many variations.

This assignment is also highly successful when class members utilize magazine illustrations for fiction. Some non-fiction photographs can work as well if they are wisely selected for dramatic impact or interesting character studies.

Variations of this technique include using photographs to illustrate settings, plots, and characterizations.

FROM NEWS ARTICLE TO STORY

MARILYN WINNINGHAM

SUN VALLEY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

This assignment is the first in the short story sequence. It is designed for an average/above average 9th grade class in Creative Writing. Students have already done short exercises covering characterization, setting, and dialogue, in addition to sensory descriptions and figurative language. In addition, they have read short stories and analyzed them for exposition, rising action, climax, basic conflict, and theme.

Students are asked to bring to class an item from the daily newspaper that contains a report of some current event, such as a hi-jacking, crime of passion, act of heroism, a "heart-warming" human interest story, or feature article, such as a letter to "Dear Abby." What is needed in the article is some kind of conflict. This conflict will become the basic conflict in a short story that the students will write in class.

Students are asked to write a brief character description of the main characters in the drama (no more than five; the preferred number is three). They should use their imaginations to "flesh out" the characters or even to create new ones. The descriptions should include any information necessary to the story but nothing beyond.

The next step involves making a plot outline, using the following basic model that was utilized earlier

when class members analyzed short stories:

1. Setting -- where and when
2. Conflict -- main problem to be solved
3. Opening situation -- what is going on as the story opens
4. Exposition -- what information is revealed that the reader must know
5. Rising action -- a chronological list of the main complications that build to the climax
6. Climax -- turning point
7. Denouement -- falling action, if any

The teacher should carefully check the story outlines for basic weaknesses in the plot. Problems that might become evident later can be anticipated at this point and corrected.

"Put it all together." Students write the short story, integrating all of their earlier learning regarding motivation, cause and effect, building suspense, meaningful dialogue, etc.

As a follow-up, several students may be asked to read the stories of other students aloud to the class as an introduction to a period of constructive criticism.

FROM ADS TO STORIES

HELEN BRINKMAN

SEPULVEDA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

After plot, theme, setting, character, dialogue, climax, and descriptive quality have been taught, an effective way to encourage students to put together such elements in a story is to request that they read (or create) want ads and examine and discuss the ads in selecting a story line. For example, the assignment below was used for this purpose. Students could choose one of the items or make up their own. Another variation is to allow students to write original ads and exchange them.

LET'S WRITE A SHORT STORY

Let's put together all the skills that make a good story. Remember to use vivid, sensory descriptions, figurative language, interesting characters (or animal characters or objects personified into a character role), objects that are important to a character and may have a symbolic meaning, and a definite setting.

As a possible basis for the situation in your story, read the following want ads. Let your imagination go! Who could be involved in the situation? Is it an unhappy child, an outer space visitor who happened upon the scene, or a frantic animal?

Steps to follow: Create characters, set the time and place, use an important object if it is appropriate, and expand the situation suggested in the ad.

REWARD: $200. 3 briefcases with records important only to me. Were taken from '71 El Dorado. Please return. No questions asked. 350-1234.

REWARD: LOST: Pacific Palisades. 7/17. Black and white shaggy, old dog. "Pepi." Nearly blind. 454-3542.

PARTNER wanted in operating horse ranch. $15,000 needed to handle. 809-7986.

Burglar alarms for the do-it-yourselfer. With this ad, 20% off for switches, tapes, bells, etc. 3856 Ventura Blvd. Encino.

STINGRAY bike. $20. 1546 Glen Lake St. Tarzana.

JOB WANTED: Oceanographer-biologist-diver. College degree. Resume on request. 889-7065.

LOST: On Santa Monica Beach. 7/26. On parking lot next to pier. Camera equipment in white

airlines bag. Sentimental value. Reward. No questions. 790-3564.

FOUND: Siamese kitten. 100 S. Normandie. 386-9876.

HEIRS CASH NOW. Call or write for information. 3465 Wilshire Blvd.

Self-hypnosis. Classes or private. 453-6709.

JUST ADD WATER INC. New & used boats, ski equipment and repairs. Call 524-7856.

ANXIOUS SELLER: Like new 3 + 2 + family room. covered patio, big Doughboy pool, parklike grounds. $38,500. 361-1319.

I am Kathy. You can depend on me. I'm an excellent housekeeper, and I love children. Registered with Barbara's Domestic Agency.

PUPPET SHOW: For children's parties. Call Jill. 987-3465.

PROFESSIONAL Wig styling. 892-3487.

LEARN TO FLY. 10 hours flight time with instructor $159.50. Green Horneta Aviation. Van Nuys. 785-7608.

ARABIAN stallion -- son of El Rahanson -- show winner. Owner must sell. 329-9643.

TREASURE FINDERS. Have metal locators, prospecting equipment, maps and catalogs.

(Of course, you may create your own ad and write from your own idea.)

When everyone has finished writing, form your usual groups and exchange stories. Read carefully and select the best ones for either reading to the class or perhaps for acting out in a skit fashion.

STEPS TO THE STORIES

RUSS MANZATT

SUTTER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The following lesson is for teaching the short story.

First, we study the techniques and structure of the short story, using good professional stories as examples. We take stories in magazines and break them down into dialogue, descriptive passages, narrative, divisions by scenes, transitional passages, character development, etc., drawing all over the magazine pages in the process.

Next, we do exercises in the techniques that we studied. By this time, each student has a working knowledge of the ingredients of a story.

The students then invent a character, describing him or her and furnishing the background and details needed to render the character believable. I stress the importance of naming the character appropriately.

The next step perhaps requires the most careful thought. The writer must place his or her character in the worst possible situation for that character. For example, if the character is an extremely shy fourteen-year-old girl, the writer might place her in a room alone with the president of the student body, a handsome lad she has a secret crush on. There is no furniture in the room and nothing to read.

The writer at this point makes a preliminary (and in no way binding) decision as to how the story ends. Then the writer begins to explore, to make decisions: what does the girl do? what do she and the boy talk about, if anything? and so on. Gropingly, the writer comes to realize that every decision made is terribly important in terms of the rest of the story.

Here the instructor must carefully guide the writer through the decision-making process in such a way that the writer will be able to do it on his or her own next time. Instead of giving the right answers, the writer asks the right questions. Is the character acting like a real human being? Is he or she acting like a particular human being? Does each event grow out of past actions and events? If the cavalry arrives at the last minute, were we prepared for it in advance, or is the writer manipulating the plot?

At the end of the writing of the first draft, most of the major wrinkles have been ironed out. Here, the instructor tells the students that a revision is due in a few days. In the second draft, the story is pared down, and every paragraph, sentence, or word that does not contribute to the total effect of the story is surgically removed.

Lastly, the instructor asks class members to prepare a final revision; and, in the face of much grumbling, the instructor informs the students that they will each submit their stories to magazines for publication under their own names, accompanied by a cover letter from the instructor. This is usually enough to propel even the most reluctant revisors onward.

Then, armed with a list of likely publications, students and instructor decide whose story should go where, and the work is submitted. (The first and only time I tried this technique one of my eighth-

grade girls sold a story for $25.!)

The method seems to work well with bright eighth and ninth graders.

MAN THE MYTH MAKER

FRANKIE SCHVERAK

SAN PEDRO HIGH SCHOOL

This is the first assignment I give my folklore class, but I feel it could be adapted for use in any English class.

Objectives: The student will be able to write a short story.

After discussion of the stories, the student will be able to distinguish a myth from other types of folktales.

Ability Level: Mixed

Grade Level: 7-12

Procedures: Day One

1. On the chalkboard, I write the poem from Myths and Modern Man that begins with the line "Man is always asking questions." The

selection raises many questions regarding the origin of living creatures and natural phenomena that have puzzled human beings for centuries.

2. We discuss the scientific explanations for some of these questions. But suppose you are a small child or a primitive man or woman with no scientific knowledge available to you. How would you answer these questions?

3. Using Stanford's book and whatever comes to mind, I briefly tell or read stories about the creation, seasons, women, the perfect man (heroes), death from many countries and cultures: Greek, Norse, Hindu, Aztec, Maori of New Zealand, Navajo, British, African, Hebrew, Japanese.[1]

4. The students suggest questions. These are written on the chalkboard. Examples: Why does the skunk have a stripe? A zebra stripes? What are clouds? Rain? Volcanoes? Why is the sea salty?

5. The students choose a question that becomes the title of the short story. Then they write the story, attempting to answer the question.

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[1] Barbara Stanford, Myths and Modern Man, Pocket Books, 1972. This is a very helpful book.

Day Two

Although they are seldom finished, the stories are read in groups. Ideas are exchanged and generated. The groups then read or tell some of the stories to the class. Stories are submitted on the next day.

Day Three

After correcting the papers, I read more of them to the class. Students can hear their own mistakes. Everyone enjoys hearing the stories and hopes his or her paper will be read. Since the purpose is to help class members distinguish myths from other types of folktales, we attempt to classify each story as either a myth or folktale, which is not always easy to accomplish.

POINT OF VIEW

JUEL GOLDSTOCK

HUNTINGTON PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Subject: English classes for Grades 10, 11, and 12

Ability: Average and above

Procedures: Often in my classes, we'll discuss the choices an author has when constructing his or her works. More specifically, I'm interested in conveying the author's selection of points of view. Why does he or she write in one point of view as opposed to another point of view? Furthermore, why does the author select certain details to develop in the story?

The best way I've found to do so and also provide a creative outlet for the class is to ask class members to read one of Poe's short stories, usually "The Tell-Tale Heart." They like the story and enjoy hearing James Mason's recorded version of it with organ background music. We'll discuss the details and the sense of horror

conveyed by Poe's first person point of view.

Assignment: Students rewrite the story, retelling it through the eyes of the victim, the old man with the "vulture eyes." Class members enjoy this assignment even more when I read the best selections to the class.

WRITING FROM LITERARY MODELS

DANIEL D. VICTOR

BURROUGHS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Preparation of a coherent short story is the goal I set for each of the 8th- and 9th-grade pupils in my Creative Writing class. Obviously, the act of writing is the best method for learning how to write. But, in addition, I like to break classic short stories into their components so students can readily react to an author's manipulation of, say, plot, character, or tone. For example, I might spend a week on point of view by asking the class to read a story like Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado," to discuss its point of view, and, finally, to write a brief description of some action -- once in the first person, then in the third. Indeed, all of my initial assignments generally contrast various elements of short stories: two accounts of the same event -- one whose tone is funny and one that is serious; two summaries of mystery plots -- one in which the criminals succeed and one in which they are caught; two accounts of the same event -- one literal, one symbolic.

Some five weeks later, after class members have written a character sketch of some friend and have explored themes, they are ready to combine the divergent parts of short fiction they have examined and to create -- as they frequently do -- imaginative short stories, both powerful and sensitive.

AN UPDATED LOCHINVAR

BARBARA ZOELLNER

IRVING JUNIOR SCHOOL

I like to use the poem "Lochinvar," by Sir Walter Scott, to create interest in story writing with ninth-grade students. Since the poem is about a handsome knight who steals a lovely bride at her wedding, it has great romantic appeal. The students follow the poem as I read it or play it on the record player. We then discuss the poem, paraphrasing difficult lines, such as "O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war?" (Did you come to begin a fight?) and "Tread we a measure!" (Let's dance.) Some words need clarifying, such as "steed," "wooed," and "clan." We listen to the poem a second time, and then I distribute copies of a story called "A Modern Lochinvar," and ask class members to write an ending. (See next page.) They are given the choice of ending it in the same way as in the poem or writing a new and original ending.

A MODERN VERSION OF "LOCHINVAR"

Below is the beginning of a story that may remind you of the poem "Lochinvar," by Walter Scott. This story, however, is happening today. How do you think this modern version would end? Write an ending to the story, using your own paper. Use ink, correct

punctuation, and correct spelling. Be neat. Write at least one page. Continue the story in any way that you wish. It doesn't have to end as the poem did.

THE STORY

Most of Yolanda Aguirre's relatives and friends were watching as she and her father slowly walked the last few steps to the altar of St. Theresa's Church. Yolanda's older sister, the matron of honor, was already waiting at the front of the church for the ceremony to begin. Beside her were the bridesmaids, including two other sisters, two cousins, and the best friend of the bride.

The bride's family and friends did not know the bridegroom very well because Yolanda had met him while she and her parents were visiting in Mexico during the preceding summer. Their opinion of him was not yet clearly defined. To some, he appeared too thin and unsmiling; to others, he seemed nervous and unsure of himself, but they had been told that he was well-educated and came from a good family.

A beam of sunshine cut diagonally across the church as the last strains of the wedding music ended, and the bride and groom stepped forward to meet the priest. The faint purr of a motor was heard outside the church and then a car door slammed. Within fifteen seconds, the center doors of the small church burst open and everyone turned abruptly to see who would dare interrupt so sacred a ceremony. Some, when they saw the figure in the doorway, gasped aloud and some smiled; but everywhere, rippling through the room like many echoes, were the words, "It's Tony! It's Tony!"

FROM READING TO WRITING

GEORGE H. SCHOENMAN

FAIRFAX HIGH SCHOOL

Students in my 10th-grade English classes read The Pearl, by John Steinbeck, and The Old Man and the Sea, by Ernest Hemingway. We spend a week or two on each book, discussing both the truth (the ideas, the thought content, the message) and the beauty (the style, the "clothing" of the truth).

After they have read each book, the students are assigned to write a story (about 5 to 10 pages in length) analogous to that of the book. The story must have a teenage protagonist in a teenage setting (either the classroom, the school, the home, the job, or social life, or any combinations). The protagonist must have a problem closely analogous to that of the characters in the book being paralleled. Then the student tries to parallel many of the problems, issues, situations, outcomes, etc., of the original. Along with the portrayal of analogous "truths" in the book, the student attempts to simulate the author's style. The purpose is not to imitate and certainly not to parody the style but to use similar metaphors, symbols, foreshadowing, sentence structure, etc., to produce a feeling similar to that of the original.

The paper is evaluated on both its creativity and its closeness to the ideas and style of the original. Some papers prove to be highly original with very slight connection to, or evocation of, the original.

Some others turn out to be almost exact copies. Both of these are "downgraded." The students who write successful papers maintain a fine balance between the two extremes.

OVERHEAD PROJECTOR AS MOTIVATOR

THOMAS YEAGER

EL SERENO JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Topics or brief descriptions of open-ended situations for stories or poems should be written on a transparency with an appropriate scene, or motif, drawn in several colors. The varied colors are very important because they intensify the value of the transparency, transforming it into an attractive, visual focal point for the class.

For example:

"Write a story about:

An African Village

A Wise, Old Man

Two Young Black Girls

A Slave Trader"

Freedom and flexibility should be encouraged in this activity. Inform the students that their writing need not concern all four ideas contained in the description of the open-ended situation. Class members may use one of them as a point of departure and go in any direction that their imaginations lead them.

This activity has been used with success in mixed

classes (low-average-gifted) of 8th and 9th graders.

It is best to use as many colors as possible on the transparency. Overhead markers may be obtained in sets of six. Use markers that are manufactured exclusively for the overhead projector. They are relatively inexpensive and may be purchased in any educational supply store.

RADIO SCRIPT

MARILYN WINNINGHAM

SUN VALLEY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The radio script assignment is designed for an average/above average 9th-grade class in Creative Writing. Students are asked to choose a half-hour or hour-long TV situation comedy or dramatic show. They should watch it often enough to be completely familiar with the main characters, settings, and various types of plots that are usually associated with it.

The assignment is to write a holiday story for the show in radio script form. This means that the plot must develop through dialogue, the characterizations must be vivid enough for a listener to know who is speaking at all times, settings must be revealed through dialogue if they are important to the plot, and narration must be kept to a minimum. The finished script should include instructions for sound effects as well as intonations of voice for the actors.

I usually let the class read a sufficient number of the finished scripts to choose the best two or three. These we "produce," either by taping the script complete with opening credits and commercials, or by presentation live, with students reading from scripts into a microphone and appropriate sound effects being supplied by other class members.

LET'S WRITE A PLAY

HELEN HASSELSCHWERT

FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL

Group Organization: The group:

1. Chooses a recorder.
2. Chooses type of play.
3. Chooses the theme.
4. Chooses the title.
5. Outlines the play with emphasis on the theme.
6. Has each member fill in his or her own dialogue.

Group Director and Recorder: With the help of the recorder, the director:

1. Gives a list of names of members to the teacher.
2. Reports the title and theme to the class.
3. Later, gives an outline

of the play to the teacher.

4. Coordinates the writing of the play.

5. Types (or has typed) ditto masters so each person in the group and the teacher will have a copy.

6. Is responsible for the conduct of the group; he or she gives to the teacher each day a report on the progress of the group.

Procedures:

1. The group works 15 to 20 minutes per day for five days.

2. Reports from each group regarding progress are given to the teacher each day.

3. The teacher circulates and works with each group.

4. Groups finishing the play early may make scenery and props.

5. Plays are presented to the class.

6. Class evaluates the plays.

Suggestions to Students:

1. Make use of some of the dramatic techniques that we have discussed, such as:

   a. Flashback

   b. Dramatic irony

   c. Puns

2. Remember the important characteristics of drama:

   a. Suspense

   b. Conflict

   c. Rising action

   d. Climax

   e. Falling action

   f. Denouement or solution

SCENES FROM THEATER OF THE ABSURD

LOUISE CONNOLLY

UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL

This is a Creative Writing project for 10th- to 12th-grade capable students who have previously written stories in which they worked on dialogue and possibly have also written dramatic monologues and a serious dramatic scene.

General Objectives: Each student will be able to:

Write a two- or three-page Theatre-of-the-Absurd scene, using humorous and satirical dialogue to ridicule a specific situation in which lack of communication is a problem.

Cast, direct, and then observe and listen to the scene being performed.

Write and receive written and oral critiques of his or her scene.

Specific Objectives: Each student will be able to create dialogue that:

Parodies use of cliches, mixed metaphors, non-sequiturs and self-contradictions, as well as other common, meaningless expressions used in everyday conversation.

Uses language echoes, ironic refrain, and sounds of words rather than meanings of words.

Is humorous or ironic and introduces surprise or anti-climatic effects and involves either hyperbole or understatement.

Materials: "The Bald Soprano" in Four Plays, by Ionesco (Grove Press).

Time: Two weeks or less, depending on size of class.

Procedures: Class reads aloud "The Bald Soprano," or observes presentation by drama students; class members then discuss techniques and targets of this type of drama.

Next I put on the chalkboard descriptions of possible

situations or peoples that lend themselves to communication problems: breakfast or dinner conversations between parents and children; classroom communication between teachers and students; student government meetings; pep rallies; teacher-parent or administrator-pupil confrontations; people and their pets; neighbors gossiping; movie, TV, or any other media presentation and the public; salesman and client; diplomats of different nations; government officials and citizens; adolescent and adolescent in social/romantic situation.

Together, we finally develop criteria for characterization, setting, plot, and the form for the scripts.

As a first step, I ask that students write a few lines of dialogue they overhear or engage in that reflect lack of communication. When the class members present their scraps of dialogue, we either work in groups or at the chalkboard to brainstorm and extend the dialogue, using theatre-of-absurd techniques noted above. We also work on transitions between topics in conversation and suggest pantomime, gestures, and sounds that might fill in voids. Students finally commit

themselves on a sign-up sheet as to when they will have their scripts ready (carbon copies also) for production.

We usually have one rehearsal, two performances, and written and then oral critiquing of everyone's brief scene. Once the ice is broken (cliché) and the first volunteer has survived his production and criticism, momentum builds as students enjoy both the humor and satire, the acting and directing. It is a very dynamic and exciting and rewarding type of creative writing. I would not attempt this activity until class members know each other well, rapport and critiquing procedures are established, and the class has confidence and is willing to try something new.

FREE RESPONSE

CAMILLE LAVIS MUIR

NARBONNE HIGH SCHOOL

The Creative Writing class is held during Period I. It is composed of 28 students in Grades 11 and 12. These students are of average and above-average ability.

The two following lessons have proved most successful because they have given each student an opportunity to use his or her creative ability to the fullest. The varied ideas and forms of expression were rewarding both for the student and the teacher. These lessons were used after rapport with the teacher was well established, and the various methods of writing had been taught and practiced. As a result, the completed works were varied. Poetry, prose, and short stories were written. Class members used the exact idea proposed or utilized it as a "springboard" for a most unusual work.

LESSON I

At the beginning of the first lesson, the teacher writes the word Kaleidoscope on the chalkboard. Its definition, derivation, and history are then discussed. The class members then pretend to look into an imaginary kaleidoscope, and describe what

they "see." The students write their impressions quickly so they do not forget what they envisaged. The procedure is repeated as many times as the students desire.

This activity leads to the next assignment, in which students are to emphasize imagery, intricate descriptions and rhythm -- based on color and thoughts not previously recorded.

LESSON II

To introduce this lesson, the teacher turns out the lights and plays mood music from the record "Stormy Weekend." The students may close their eyes and just listen to the sounds; then the lights are turned on again, and class members jot down any thoughts thus far. This procedure is then repeated as often as it is productive. When the activity concludes, students write a complete story or poem. It is refreshing to read their entries because as many as 28 different approaches, stories, poems, and moods have evolved.

THE HUMAN SPIRIT

MARJORIE KASSORLA

MILLIKAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The following is an example of a writing assignment (divided into two parts) that I use in my 9th-grade experimental honors class. (The assignment sheet appears on the next page.) The reading selections listed are for a unit called "The Human Spirit," which concerns the attempts of individuals to reach out to other people and the opportunity to experience the beauty of feeling for another person.

Prior to writing, we read and discuss the selections and do group work on finding significant passages in The Little Prince. During our discussions, I point out similarities in the author's ideas and/or attitudes of characters. All of this is also tied to prior discussions of Dandelion Wine relating to the idea of Doug's real maturity. He not only can come to terms with loss, change, and death but also, at the end of the novel, learn from Mr. Jonas; move out of himself; and reach out to help others. This same idea will later be compared to Jody's growing maturity in The Red Pony when he reaches out to help Grandfather in "The Leader of the People."

Because of the sensitive nature of the selections and because I'm trying to get the students to respond on an emotional level themselves, these two assignments are purposely unstructured. (We do a good deal of structured writing at other times.) My purpose here is to stimulate students to react,

hopefully to identify with the emotions expressed in the literature, and to be able to see the common threads running through the readings.

By the time the students write this assignment, they have read and discussed the reading selections, but the quotations are new to them.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT SHEET

"The Human Spirit"

OUR READING:

1. "Beggar on O'Connell Bridge," Ray Bradbury
2. "Christmas Memory," Truman Capote
3. "Ballad of the Harp-Weaver," Edna St. Vincent Millay
4. The Little Prince, Antoine de Saint Exupéry
5. The Giving Tree, Shel Silverstein
6. "No Man Is an Island," John Donne

QUOTATIONS:

1. Don't walk in front of me --

I may not follow.
Don't walk behind me --
I may not lead.
Walk beside me --
and just be my friend.

--- Camus

2. The main thing in life is not to be afraid to be human.

--- Pablo Casals

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Select one of the quotations, and tell how it relates to one or more of the selections we have read in this unit. The number of reading selections you choose, the form of the paper, and the length of the paper are up to you. Besides telling how you think the quotation relates to the reading, you may describe your own attitudes as they relate to the quotation you choose.

2. Bring a picture to class that, in some way, relates to one or more of the readings in this unit. It may relate to the entire selection or some aspect of it, to some character, or even to some line from the selection. Explain briefly in writing why you choose the illustration. The picture can be of people,

animals, scenes, color, abstracts, or shapes. In short, the picture need not illustrate the reading specifically but should relate to it. Mount the picture on colored paper. Attach the separate piece of paper that contains what you have written. Work neatly so we can share your ideas by displaying your work on the bulletin board.

DYSTOPIA

MARY E. OLSEN

NARBONNE HIGH SCHOOL

A writing assignment that I used for the first time in a senior composition class resulted in the best writing of that semester. For a detailed description of this assignment, see "Shaping the Dystopian Nightmare" in the November, 1967, issue of the English Journal.

The author's idea was that his students should, by taking any one trend apparent in today's world, create in writing a dystopia in a future age. The word "dystopia" was the writer's own invention, an antonym for utopia.

I told my class what the assignment was a week before the students were to write the paper. We discussed Orwell's 1984, Shute's On the Beach, and Benet's "By the Waters of Babylon," which illustrate how these writers projected their views of the future. We also discussed a number of trends revealed in newspaper and magazine articles. Each student was to choose his or her own trend to develop, either from those discussed or from others that the student located independently. Some suggested during student discussion in class were the increasing transplantation of vital organs (soon after the first heart transplant); the predictions of overpopulation which would result in an SRO world; the menacing threat of more water and air pollution; the continuing racial struggles;

international dissensions; and changes in clothing and hair styles.

Class members were allowed two periods in which to write the paper, based on an outline that each student had prepared in advance. On the first day, the student wrote a rough draft; and, on the second, he or she wrote a polished, final copy.

The class was one of average ability, and only two students had shown special creativeness in previous assignments. Yet the class members' dystopia papers were far superior to any others they had done, and almost all of them showed real imaginative ability. None digressed from the chosen subject, and students showed far more care than usual in eliminating mechanical errors in their papers because they were really interested in the assignment.

TELEVISION COMMERCIALS

Because television captures so many of the waking hours of high school students, why not let it provide a basis for writing assignments? I have used one with success in English classes. I ask the students to pick any current television commercial that impresses them as being most or least apt to sell the sponsor's product. The students are not to assume I have seen or heard the commercial they choose. They are to describe in detail the sensory appeals in the commercial. By their descriptions, the students must make it possible for me to visualize what they've seen on the screen. They must include the content of the sound track with an accurate retelling of the

words that carry the sponsor's message, either orally or by printed message. If other sensory appeals are included, such as tactile or olfactory ones, what are they? Since writers of advertising often use implications rather than direct statements to suggest what their products may do for the consumer, the students are to watch especially for these implications and explain them as they appear in the commercials that they have selected.

After presenting the commercials as vividly and comprehensively as possible, the students conclude with paragraphs in which they evaluate theirs as being good or bad advertising. These questions indicate the kind of thinking the students should follow in their evaluations: Will the commercial sell or fail to sell the product? Is it offensive or insulting to the intelligence of the viewer? Does it transgress against good taste? Does it use the "hard" or "soft" sales approach? Is it esthetically appealing? Does it base its interest on humor? Does it have a "gimmick?" Will the viewer remember it and make a firm connection between it and the product?

Students receive the assignment several days in advance so that they may make their choices and study them closely in preparing for the actual writing of the paper.

Most students have seemed to enjoy this assignment and have carried it out well.

CREATING SCALES OF VALUES

PAUL LINKER

HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL

Questions: What are values?

How are values established, maintained, changed?

I. DEFINING GREATNESS

A. Choose an area of the arts or sciences, preferably one which is unfamiliar, so as to broaden our horizons.

B. Do some research to learn about an individual who has achieved in the chosen area.

C. Define the quality of greatness.

D. Establish that the individual chosen meets the definition.

II. COMPARING OR RATING OF PEOPLE AND THINGS

A. Definition: Establish a scale of

political views, from monarchy to democracy.

B. Description: Compare personal-empirical and vicarious experiences that were delightful in contrast to those that were unpleasant.

C. Evaluation: Compare people and things as to a quality, such as who or what has or has not style.

ORGANIZING FACTUAL MATERIAL

RAYMOND STEINBERG

HUGHES JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

This is a basic lesson on the organization of factual material, a procedure which has been used with students needing remedial work in expository writing in Grade 9.

My preliminary instructions are brief. I tell the students that we are going outdoors to test our skills in observation and that they are to bring writing materials. I ask the class members simply to list all of the things they hear and see.

When we leave the classroom, I take the students to an interesting place on campus where they can spend a quiet half hour without being disturbed by other students. After they are settled and start writing, most students soon realize that listing everything is impossible and ask for further direction. I find it easy to give individual attention in this environment.

When we return to the classroom, I ask a few students to read their lists aloud. Then I ask each class member to write a composition about the outdoor experience, using the material on his or her list. The best place to begin, I tell them, will be to consider ways of organizing the material. I suggest possible classifications of items, such as by color, by size, or by functional and non-functional. These I list on the chalkboard and

then ask for additional suggestions from the class; some of these are also listed.

The next step is for each student to organize his or her list, according to one of the given classifications. Then class members begin writing their compositions. I remind them that not every item need be included. Most of the writing is done in class, and I try to see each paper in its preliminary stages so that I am certain every student understands the assignment. When the papers are completed, I read them aloud so that they can be shared.

Now I request that students look at their lists once more and arrange their items according to another classification. Then they write another composition, based on this new organization.

In the final step, each student compares his or her two papers and decides which is better. The students number the best paper #1. The papers are then collected, and evaluations are made in conference with each student.

I try to make it clear to each of the writers that his or her list could be compared to any factual material the student may use for reports in other subjects.

HUMOROUS MEMOIRS

PAUL CONNOLLY

HUNTINGTON PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Objective: Stimulate the student's imagination and fancy to write about himself or herself as an object worth describing.

Motivation: Can you imagine what you will look like when you are eighty-five years of age?

Activity:

1. As a prior activity, the students have read H. L. Mencken's autobiographical essay titled "In the Footsteps of Gutenberg," in which he attributes his literary career to a childhood Christmas gift of a small printing press. The students discuss the elements of humor in this proposal.

2. Students then answer questions as to current fascinations they may have; viz., mod pictures in bedroom, stylish clothing, collecting glass fragments, photography, hair styling, rock painting.

3. Then class members fabricate a

successful career based on some minor incident in their childhood and write their memoirs from the viewpoint of a benevolent octogenarian.

Evaluation: On the basis of plausibility and humor. It is not considered satisfactory for the student to give a chronology from the first light of day till age eighty-five.

WRITING CLINIC

BEVERLEY W. RODGERS

IRVING JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Every year I conduct a Writing Clinic, which is a crash program designed to improve the student's ability to express himself or herself on paper. The clinic lasts only two weeks. During this time, the student writes a paragraph every day on some topic decided upon individually, by me, or by the class. While the students are writing their paragraphs, I am briefly pointing out to each one individually the strengths and weaknesses of his or her effort of the previous day. The student then rewrites his or her paragraph, making needed corrections. At the end of the first week, general areas of improvement are discussed with the entire class, and a grade is given on the five paragraphs. To each student's set of papers, I attach a copy of the form that appears on page 120.

Topics may range from observations on current world or school events to creative projects, such as dreams, imaginary trips, unforgettable moments, and "My Life on Planet X." The clinic should take approximately one half hour each day.

I feel that the student, because of the variety of activities possible in an English class, often loses sight of the basic principles of good writing. The clinic is designed to reawaken the student dramatically to such requirements without making

the process an ordeal. Also, the student is actually writing, not reading about writing, and more attention is devoted to actual individual problems rather than those of a mythical student writer.

My correction of papers while class is in progress has the twin advantages of giving prompt feedback to the student and of avoiding tedious hours of correcting papers outside of class.

NAME _____
PERIOD _____

WRITING CLINIC NO. 1

I. Assignments complete: yes ____ no _____

You are lacking the following assignments:

A. My Goals for the Second Semester _____
B. Animals _____
C. Crazy Clothes Day ____
D. The Moon Walk -- Contrasts ____
E. The Earthquake _____

II. You need to work in the following areas to improve your paragraphs:

A. Mechanics of Writing
   1. Penmanship _____
   2. Neatness _____
   3. Punctuation _____
   4. Capitalization _____
   5. Indenting _____
   6. Spelling of simple words _____
   7. Language _____
   8. Other _____

B. Choice of Words
   1. More interesting _____
   2. More varied -- no repetition _____

C. The Idea of Your Paragraph Could Be:
   1. More clearly expressed _____
   2. More original _____

D. Organization of Your Paragraph _____

E. A More Interesting Title _____

F. Other _____

SECTION 3

WRITING VERSE

DIGESTIVE POETRY

DELORES L. BUTTELMAN

MADISON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

A novel approach to making poetry more acceptable to students in conjunction with a creative writing exercise came to mind when I read "How to Eat a Poem" by Eve Merriam.* Miss Merriam invites the reader to "bite" unhesitatingly into poetry, without worrying about any standard procedure or rules, and savor the experience much the same way he or she would relish eating a temptingly juicy or exotic fruit.

To illustrate the poem more vividly to the students, I prepared a poster displaying the poem and surrounded it by pictures of various foods. I then read the poem to the students and attempted to make them see that the act of figuratively digesting the poem was similar to the act of eating, which is a basic experience common to everyone.

Through discussion, the students gradually discovered a process with which to approach poetry that is similar to the process of eating. They concluded that eating involves tasting, responding to the taste, thinking about the taste, and, finally, deciding whether the food was pleasing or not to taste.

* Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1968.

Similarly, poetry involves reading, responding to the lines/ideas, analyzing the content, and making a judgment about whether the poem is good or bad.

As a culminating writing experience, I asked the students to choose an action or process they had experienced and to compare it with that of poetry. For example, one student wrote about "How to Swim a Poem," noting that you take a deep plunge into water when swimming and a deep plunge into poetry for analytical purposes, which result in gaining an awareness of rhythm in both. Another student wrote about "How to Needlepoint a Poem" and suggested that color selection is important to needlepointing and that colorful words are mandatory in poetry. Still another compared poetry to coin collecting and concluded that both had a great deal of value.

It was gratifying that students who were below average in their composition work grasped the basic concepts and similarities involved in this lesson and seemed to approach writing and poetry with a less distasteful attitude. Several, in fact, composed their own poetry and really enjoyed listening to me interpret their poems.

DRAW YOUR LIFE

MARJORIE KASSORLA

MILLIKAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The following assignment is used with average students in a poetry mini-unit. I have also used it to motivate prose writing in Creative Writing classes.

In the poetry unit, we have done some work prior to the writing assignment. We have read several poems and discussed who is the speaker in each poem. Using Roethke's "My Papa's Waltz" and Coffin's "Forgive My Guilt," we note that, in both, the speaker is "I" writing as an adult looking back to a moment that was very important. The importance is much more clear in "Forgive My Guilt." We speculate on the reason Roethke chose the moment to write about in "My Papa's Waltz." I emphasize the parent-child relationship and the feelings the child must have had while whirling around the room at a dizzying pace.

Then I distribute pencils, paper, and crayons and simply say, "Draw your life." I give no other instructions and will answer no "how-do-I-do-it" questions. I do tell the students that the assignment will not be graded, that their artistic ability certainly doesn't matter, and that, if they cannot draw at all, they can use stick figures. Class members determine the number of pictures they draw, the size of them, the arrangement, and the type of drawing. Since it will not be graded and

probably not even collected, they need not feel embarrassed about their art work. However, I emphasize that it is very important that the students do the assignment and that, when they are done, I'll tell them why they did it and what they are going to do next. In short, I ask them to "have faith," and they usually accept this. I want them to work without inhibition and certainly without trying to please the teacher. They work eagerly and usually take the whole class period to draw.

After their drawings are complete, I ask class members to focus on one incident they have illustrated. It must involve themselves and one or both of their parents. I point out that it must have been important or they wouldn't have included it in the first place and they wouldn't be choosing it now. I ask them to notice how big or small they drew the subject, to note the color, and to consider why they drew it in the way they did. I also ask the students to notice what came before and after the subject.

I then explain that this incident will be the basis of a poem they will write. The poem must be about an incident involving themselves and one or both parents. It isn't necessary to retell every detail of the incident. Rather, the poem should suggest to the reader his or her feelings during the incident. Some students ask if they can contrast the feelings they have now as they look back on the incident with the feelings they had at the time. I tell them that this is fine if that's how they want to do it. I show these students "Reflections on the Gift of Watermelon Pickle" as an example of use of a break in time, pointing out the lines "It was a summer of limitless bites....The bites are fewer now."

Since the assignment is to be the first poem the students have written, I don't want to weigh them down with many technical details of poetry. I'm trying to get them to go back in time, recapture feelings, and get those feelings across to the reader so that the reader can think about them himself or herself, perhaps relate to them, and perhaps expand on them. I emphasize that poetry does not have to rhyme and, in fact, trying to make it rhyme may force writers to contrive and use words that don't mean what they really want to say. I also emphasize, however, that poetry is the conciseness of language, the use of few words to suggest a large idea. The only technical points I discuss here are some suggestions on how to break the lines and the introduction of the idea of synesthesia as a technique for getting across feelings.

This is the sequence of activities for students that should precede writing of their first poem.

PAINTING PICTURES WITH WORDS

MARJORIE M. BOOKER

HORACE MANN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Objective: The student will be able to use some fundamental words that are characteristic of poetry in gaining a greater understanding of its creative development.

Grade: 7th (high); 8th - 9th (average and above average)

Motivation: I. Introduction

A. Ask students questions that will lead to discussion, such as "What is poetry?"

B. Request that students think a moment and respond on paper to what they feel, think, and hear as you read these words. Just write the groups of words on the chalkboard; do not write sentences.

love	bee
fear	fight

hate	sunset
mother	midnight
school	fail
ice	"A"
rainy day	

C. Write this definition on the chalkboard:

Poetry deals with a universal idea or ideas common to all people. It is created with language that is presented in a unique way or in the form of a picture. Poetry is created in the bed of imagination and when read becomes rhythmic and pleasing to the ear. Poetry is feeling brought to life by words.

D. Note that there are many other definitions. Suggest that each student write a detailed definition of his or her own or find someone else's definition during the study of the unit. Ask the students to give the name of the author if their definition is not original.

Vocabulary: Encourage students to review the meanings of such words as the following:

rhyme	literal
rhythm	alliteration

phrasing	assonance
metaphor	imagery
simile	apostrophe
figurative	imagination

Other Stimulating Exercises:

I. Write beginning lines of poems on the chalkboard and ask students to complete them. Encourage students to write additional verses if they wish. For example:

A. Love's burning _____

Beckons _____

Sweet music _____

Comes to _____

B. Time spreads _____

Through the _____

Today is _____

Yesterday is _____

Today _____

Tomorrow _____

II. Read selected poems to the class and/or ask members of the class to read them aloud.

III. Identify skills in writing poetry that are demonstrated in student work.

IV. Lead a discussion of the characteristics of poetic language, such as the following:

Universal appeal

Figurative

Multiplicity of meaning or interpretation

Subject of universal interest; "speaks to all"

Expressions of feeling

Sincerity

Sharpness of statements; to the point

Flowing easily

Rhythmic

Dynamic

V. Review vocabulary words and give examples of each word. Read some poems to illustrate use of these words.

VI. List subjects or ideas on the chalkboard, and ask students to write a poem using some of the techniques studied.

Topics might include:

Love	The Ocean
School	Death
My Happiest Day	Life
Rain	Beauty
Night	A Friend

VII. Encourage students to give you lines to place on the chalkboard; readjust words and ideas if needed to create a poem.

VIII. Instruct class members to write five words that rhyme with each of the following words to help them sharpen their thinking and responses:

long	duty
day	shy
darkness	light
angelic	compassion
	delicate

For Example:

long	way	night
song	day	might

IX. Ask students to respond to ideas or words by using one or two of these examples:

Music	Life is short.
Love	Beauty is vain.
Danger	Honesty is best.
Forgiveness	Black is pure.
Black	Man is free.
White	Youth is a challenge.
Flowers	Death is rest.
Mother	War is death.
Father	Man is mighty.
War	Man is foolish.
Death	Sin is decay.
	Life is uncertain.

X. Instruct students to write a poem, using any of the above

ideas or words as a topic.

XI. Request that students listen to different types of music and try to create a scene or picture in their minds. They should write a brief description of what they imagined and then a poem based upon the same topic.

AWAKENING THE SENSES

SHARON ORT

NOBEL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Objectives: The student will be able to:

1. Utilize all his or her senses to perceive the world.
2. Write descriptions that are sensuous.
3. Write accurate similes.

Initiating the Lesson: Ask the students, "What ways do we have of verbally describing something to someone?" (Adjectives, comparing one object to another; place examples on the chalkboard.)

The Lesson: Explain to class members that they will hear, smell, touch, and taste many different items. For each item, they are to write a brief description of how it sounds, what it tastes like, etc. (Another lesson will deal exclusively with the sense of sight.) Present a variety of sounds, smells, etc., grouped according to the sense

to which they appeal.

For example:

Sound:

While they listen, students close their eyes.

egg beater

noise maker

sifter

horn

squeeze toy

baby rattle

spoon banging on a pan

Smell:

garlic salt

cologne

lemon

room deodorant spray

Taste:

potato chips

sugar cubes

peanut butter

Touch:

emery boards

cotton balls

fabric

walnuts

After each item is introduced, students write a description of it. Descriptions are read aloud after all items are presented.

Follow-Up Assignments: Instruct students to answer a series of questions such as those listed in Postman and Weingartner's Teaching as a Subversive Activity, p. 175.

Sample questions:

1. What do you hear if you are in a car when it is raining outside?

2. How would you describe the odor of gasoline?

3. What does hair feel like?

Students write answers in unnumbered phrases so they appear to form a poem. After learning how easy it is to produce poetry by using sensuous description, students write their own "favorite things" poems.

EXPLORING THE SENSES

SHIRLEY HOESCHE

SOUTH GATE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

In What Is That Sound! (Atheneum, 1966), Mary L. O'Neill explores to the fullest one of our five senses -- hearing, or the ability of human beings to distinguish between the numerous sounds that bombard the ears day and night.

She asks such fascinating questions as "What is the sound of a giggle?" or "What is a wail?" Ms. O'Neill includes memorable poems with such titles as "The Sounds of the City" and "The Sound of Air."

To expand upon Ms. O'Neill's approach, it is possible for students to utilize the other four senses in an interesting exercise. The students first might be given copies to read of a few poems from What Is That Sound! (or the teacher might read the poems to the class). Next, the students should suggest other titles that could easily be added to Ms. O'Neill's list such as "The Sound of Battle" or "The Sounds of School."

With the students, write a short "Sound" poem on the chalkboard without emphasizing rhyme, rhythm, or meter. Then either provide the students with suggested titles, help them develop titles, or let them come up with their own ideas. From the sense of hearing, progress to the senses of sight, taste, touch, and smell; and, finally, instruct students to try utilizing more than one sense at a time.

Some suggested titles are listed below, but there is no reason why students shouldn't use their own ideas as well.

Sounds of Christmas

Sounds of Life

Sounds of the Farm

Sounds of the City

The Sound of Night

Sound of Ocean

Storm

Sounds of Sadness

Sounds of Children

Sights of the City

What Is Color?

Blue

Red

Winter Sights

Summer Scenes

Country Beauty

Earth in Autumn

Spring

Rough to the Touch

Soft

The Feel of Air

Smooth

Hard

Bumpy

Furry

Sharp!

Wet

Taste of Sour

Sweet

Bitter

Salty

Hot!

Spicy

Happy Tastes

Chocolate

Peppermint!

Autumn Perfume

Holiday Aromas

Sea

Fresh

Clean

Breakfast

Home

Life

School

Nature

Love

Hate

Fear

Sadness

Warmth

What Is a Smile?

Music

A FIVE-DAY SEQUENCE IN DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

HELEN HASSELSCHWERT

FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL

These lessons on poetry are primarily designed as an introduction to a unit on poetry for English 10. Because the students can have fun with these lessons and understand what poetry is all about, they can then read with more understanding and appreciation the poems in the text. The lessons are greatly expanded, especially the types of poetry, for Creative Writing.

I. I place pictures, posters, drawings, paintings of all types and sizes all around the room. The students get up and look at each of the objects; then each student chooses one to describe. First, he or she writes descriptions; then the student utilizes these descriptions in producing figures of speech; finally, the student puts his or her thoughts into some kind of poetic expression -- perhaps haiku, cinquain, couplets, quatrains -- whatever he or she prefers. Usually, I begin this lesson by asking the class to experiment on a group basis so the students will clearly understand what to do.

II. The class listens to music without words that would interfere with their thinking creatively. They write whatever the music motivates, following the same routine that was used with

the pictures. (Both the students and I bring the records to class.)

III. We take a walk outside -- to the quad, down the street, or to a park if we have time -- to observe nature. Class members then write about their expressions of nature.

IV. We briefly discuss our feelings about love, hate, fear, war, death, loneliness. The students choose one or more of these ideas and write poetic expressions.

V. The students choose the materials that they wish to submit for grading and make whatever revisions or corrections seem necessary. The selections are then placed in a class booklet. The assignments have been submitted to the teacher each day, so none of the work has been done outside of class.

ALONG HEROIC LINES

MARY LOU LIGHT

BANCROFT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

This assignment is based upon the poem "A Tribute to J.F.K.," which appears in Projections on page 179. I asked each class member to choose his or her own hero. Then the student was to write a poem based on the exact syllabic pattern of the poem, using the same number of lines.

The fact that the assignment was so structured gave some of the less able writers more confidence. Almost every poem which was submitted was good; some were excellent.

LESSON ON THE SONNET

EUNICE K. HORWITZ

HUGHES JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

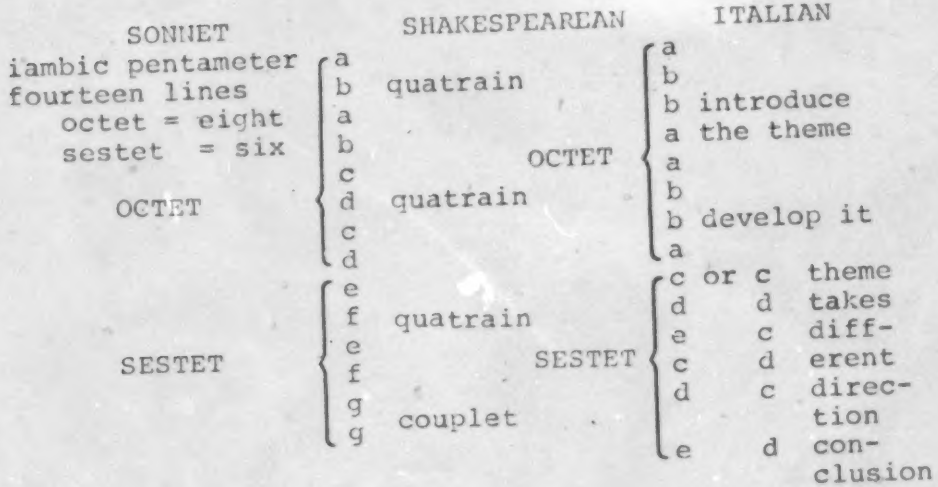
Prior to this lesson, students will have read and written acceptable forms of the haiku, tanka, cinquain, and free verse; they will have had experience with the couplet and quatrain and gained a writing knowledge of rhyme scheme and metre.

Objective: Students, having the knowledge of the correct structure and rhythm, will be able to write their own sonnets.

Procedures:

1. Students will study the form of the Shakespearean sonnet.
2. They will read sonnets by Shakespeare and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, to establish the meter, count the feet, and recognize the rhyme scheme.
3. They will discuss the varied subject matter and the general pattern of development and begin to list their own topics.
4. They will begin to write the

sonnet in class. The following will be placed on the chalkboard before students enter the classroom:



Although two forms of the sonnet are presented, I suggest that the students begin with the Shakespearean type since they have already worked with the couplet and quatrain. Their greatest concern seems to be writing a ten-beat line! Copies of "How Do I Love Thee?" and of Shakespeare's Sonnets XXIX and XXX are distributed. I retell the love story of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, also mentioning The Barretts of Wimpole Street. I read the poems aloud; the students follow. Then we scan the lines, as students tap fingertips in rhythm on their desk tops, to study the rhyme scheme and the meaning of the lines. We are fortunate in having several class sets of Impressions, our own creative writing magazine. We next read the student sonnets that it contains.

Class members then write one line in iambic pentameter. These are read aloud as they are developed. Each student, after choosing a rhyme scheme, attempts the second line. Some have written four lines by the end of the period. Most students ask to take their papers home to "work" on them; and some return with a completed sonnet. Following this period, ideas for sonnets are culled from student experiences, perceptions, and emotions. Class members then write additional sonnets.

Resource Books Available in Classroom:

Love Poems and Sonnets of William Shakespeare
Sonnets From the Portuguese
The Complete Rhyming Dictionary, edited by Clement Wood

A collection of poetry books from the school library

CONCRETE DETAILS

MARILYN WINNINGHAM

SUN VALLEY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

This poetry assignment is designed for an average/above average 9th-grade class in Creative Writing. The objective of the lesson is to teach students how to suggest an abstract idea through the use of concrete details.

Begin by reading and discussing "Incident," by Countee Cullen. Ask questions to help class members understand that the poem is describing prejudice, an abstract idea, even though the poet at no time mentions prejudice. The reader is left to make inferences: "The reader begins where the poem leaves off."

Encourage students to suggest abstract ideas and write them on the chalkboard. An easy beginning would be to suggest emotions, such as love, hate, guilt, joy, fear, and jealousy. Other abstract ideas could include peace, war, understanding, and frustration.

Then ask students to remember when they have felt one of these emotions very strongly. Request that they focus on that memory and jot down everything they can remember about the experience that produced the emotion -- not only what happened but also how they felt and what they thought at the time.

Instruct students to select carefully the details that they will use to suggest their main ideas. Remind them that they are to suggest, not explain. Emphasize that class members should concentrate on the dominant impression that they wish to make by using specific concrete details. Then instruct them to proceed with writing the poem.

IMITATING AN AUTHOR

JUEL GOLDSTOCK

HUNTINGTON PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Subject: American Literature

Grade Level: 11

Ability: Slow, average, and academically enriched

Procedures: Basically, what I ask my students to do is imitate the work of a writer. Their assignment usually consists of reading the available literature by the writer; if he or she is a poet, I generally supplement the text material by distributing copies of additional poems. Part of the written assignment is to list the various qualities that are characteristic of the poet's style. Usually, students are also asked to discuss, in one paragraph, the kind of person the writer is/was; in other words, to prepare a character sketch based upon the author's available works.

On the next day, we list on the chalkboard the various qualities of the writers and discuss the biographical information derived from the literature itself. Ultimately, students develop something resembling a working knowledge of what makes the author/poet tick and how he or she records ideas.

With the exception of Poe, all writers whom I ask students to imitate are poets. For Whitman, for example, they are to write a "Whitman poem" with a minimum of eight lines. What I receive are portions of what often resemble missing sections of "Song of Myself." They follow, in content and in form, much of what I think even Whitman would approve. We also discuss the "soft" side of Whitman, and some students write poems in imitation of such selections as "To a Stranger" or "As Adam Early in the Morning."

During the course, I ask students to write these poems as we discuss McKuen, S. Crane, Sandburg, and Cummings. For Poe, we discuss the elements of mood and tone as reflected in his stories, and class members write a half page of a story Poe might have written. This assignment can be based upon the beginning, middle, or end of the "unwritten story."

All in all, the assignment is generally successful. My students get to "play" at being somebody. The poems are read aloud (usually by me), and the class can invariably tell which ones conform to the writers' styles, or which do not,

and why. Many slow students like the assignments and often surprise me with the quality of their work. Some are proud, since they have never written much of anything for anyone, much less a "poem."

THE RULES OF WRITING PROJECTIVE POETRY

BERNARD GOODMANSON

RESEDA HIGH SCHOOL

THE RULES OF WRITING PROJECTIVE POETRY

1. The purpose of projective poetry is the discovery of the personal voice.

2. The emphasis is wholly on process; results are of no particular importance. If enough poetry is written, the chances are that some of it will be of interest to other class members. But the important consideration in this project is the joy of creation -- free of critical analysis and of such considerations as tradition and marketability.

3. The artificial dualism of form and content is no longer respected in this style of writing. It is the poet's responsibility to improvise a form appropriate to the shape and contours of his or her idea. Since the idea is to be unique, the student is under no obligation to shape his or her poem to the form of another writer or of another age.

4. This poem is radically visual. And, being an

eye experience, it need not be loaded with the mnemonic hardware of preliterate ages. The writer must consider typography rather than sound values.

5. In this type of poetry, the questions to avoid are the following:

   a. Is it good?

   b. Is it art?

   c. Is it profound?

   d. Is it difficult?

   e. Is it productive of acclaim or status?

6. On the other hand, the following questions are important for the poet to ask himself or herself:

   a. Is it me? (If you are compelled to use the "I" form, use it.)

   b. Is it fun to make?

   c. Is it sincere?

   d. Is it visually oriented?

   e. Is it a unity of form/content?

7. The poem should portray an "action" in which the poet commits himself or herself consciously to an immediate first version. Revision is forbidden until the whole experience is put on paper. Later versions of the poem will usually improve it by removing weak or extraneous segments and by improving the diction.

8. Intuition and the subconscious processes should be tapped. Therefore, whatever conditions inhibit this process should be avoided. Each poet needs to discover the way to his or her own personal voice because this will be the medium for the best writing.

ONE METHOD OF ACHIEVING PROJECTIVE POEMS

THE WATER COLOR POEM

Instruct the student to paint a water color design or picture on a sheet of paper in which space is left for a poem. The poem is added after the painted "doodle" is completed. The poem should not be composed directly on the paper but worked out carefully first until it is in an acceptable form.

CRITICISM OF PROJECTIVE POEMS

1. No comments should be made that evaluate the performance with reference to the rules for another game.

2. This game has its own rules. To a certain extent, the author is the best judge of what constitutes his or her personal voice. One must not be too much of a "Nice Nelly" or a traditionalist in judging this style of writing.

3. If this theory or approach irritates you, avoid it. It is a familiar idea in Zen that art is

for the artist's personal growth -- both as a person and as an artist. In Western culture, on the other hand, we tend to wish to write in a market-consumer nexus. Hence, we tend to underrate the personal approach by which much of enduring value is created.

THE GOODMANSON PRELIMINARY TEST OF VERBAL CREATIVITY

1. Word choice

Ask students to respond to each of the following questions with a single word for each:

What word do you consider

1. the most beautiful? _____
2. the ugliest? _____
3. the saddest? _____
4. the best one to give a child as a gift? _____
5. the best one to write on a slip of paper to be left with your will? _____
6. the best one to describe your authentic, inner self? _____
7. the most appropriate to be sewn on a banner and carried aloft before crowds? _____

8. the best to describe your generation?

9. the best to be engraved on a ring to be given to a loved one? _____

10. the best for making yourself feel better when you are depressed? _____

11. your personal favorite? _____

II. Sentences

Provide students with 10 or 12 examples of cartoons and provocative photographs from which captions and descriptions have been removed. Ask students to compose fresh captions and sentences to go with these pictures. Suggest a limit of three sentences each.

III. Short paragraph

Give students samples of words, phrases, and sentences cut out of newspapers and magazines; e.g., "Where are they now?", "Her secret is out -- ," "That's a load off our . . .," "CENSORED," "The Heroic Code of an Unheroic.." "A few moments longer," "How to shape up."

These must be incorporated into one short paragraph that has coherence and unity.

IV. Write-a-poem-around-the-print

Distribute to students copies of phrases from

magazines and newspapers. Paste these phrases on a sheet of blank paper, spacing them so that students can write around them. Ask students to fill in the spaces around the printed words in such a way that the result resembles a poem. For example:

If this little

skimmer
and sparkle

each one filled with

eyes,

lips and fingertips.

of the first

I don't

SUGGESTIONS FOR GRADING

Assign points for each item according to the following scale:

A.	Not appropriate	0 points
B.	Appropriate but obvious	1 point

C. Appropriate but only mildly unexpected — 2 points

D. Unexpected and very appropriate — 3 points

The score on this test is the total of all points earned on individual items. We would suggest that you give some thought to arriving at a reasonable definition of the word appropriate. There is often more of audacity than decorum in creative work.

SECTION 4

A GALIMAUFRY OF INSTRUCTIONAL GAMBITS

BEYOND BOUNDARY LINES

HELEN CHROSTOWSKI

IRVING JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

After reviewing the film Boundary Line and discussing answers to a few leading questions from the teacher, the students were asked to take five to seven minutes to write a "quick list" in answer to "What Is a Boundary Line?" The teacher kept the lists for a few days (REASONS: forgetting period and thinking period) and brought them out on homework day. Then a half hour or more was spent in discussing the meaning of the film, reading some of the lists, and thinking aloud of creative ways in which the lists could be transformed into finished products. Some of the ideas for finished products that resulted from thinking aloud were: 1 -- a better list; 2 -- a paragraph; 3 -- two paragraphs contrasting natural and man-made boundaries; 4 -- a poem; 5 -- a poem built around the letters B*O*U*N*D*A*R*Y* L*I*N*E*S; 6 -- a graphic presentation, using pictures, sketches, lines, etc. The students prepared their final revisions as homework. THE RESULTS WERE TERRIFIC!

This lesson was used with 7th- and 9th-graders; the finished products revealed different levels of interpretation. With variations, the same techniques can be used for any thought-provoking film, story, news article, bulletin notice, etc.

MISCELLANEOUS SCRAPS

JUEL GOLDSTOCK

HUNTINGTON PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Subject: World Literature

Ability: Average and above average

After a discussion of the Symbolist poets, I ask each student to take pencil and paper and write a line of poetry that involves use of a color; then successive lines using an animal, a girl's name, and any one of a variety of subjects. Each line is to create a mood. I divide the class into groups and instruct each group to use the mood sentences to compose a poem. Thus, the class produces four, five or six mood poems, each bordering on the Baudelairean.

Subject: English Literature

After a discussion of the Anglo-Saxon riddle, students write a riddle of this type. The emphases are upon such items as rhythm and caesuras. The results are

invariably good. I make copies of the better riddles, and class members discuss them and guess what the solutions are.

Subject: American Literature

After a discussion of Thoreau, I instruct students to imagine that they have each received an invitation from Thoreau to stay at Walden Pond. Class members must write responses indicating whether they can accept the invitation and the reasons for their decisions. Results are generally good.

Subject: English 10

Students are asked to imagine that the earth is being destroyed through some quirk of nature (a comet collision, generally), and that only a limited number of people can be saved. Those selected will board a rocket and take off for places unknown. The students are asked to write a statement explaining why they should be included on the flight. Strangely, some class members respond by saying that they would prefer to remain on earth. These students are asked to explain in their statements the reasons for this choice.

I've also used basically the same assignment after the class has read Wilder's Our Town.

Subject: English 10

I play a piece of music, usually something by Pink Floyd (acid-type rock), for about 10-15 minutes. The assignment for students is to write a story for which the selection can be used as background music. The results are consistently excellent.

Subject: English Literature

Following a discussion of Beowulf and the nature of the epic, I ask students to create their own epic characters. They must chart the qualities of the epic form and how it applies to their character, and answer such questions as these: What different adventures? What lands? What villains will he/she/it encounter? What supernatural events? Class members must then write a specified number of lines of their epic, utilizing the poetic-epic traditional forms. (See the assignment regarding the preparation of a riddle.)

Subject: English 10

Students are to take a coin or currency and pretend that they are citizens living in the year 2001. They are to assume that they have just found the money in their backyards and are to explain briefly in writing what they believe they know of the civilization that produced the coin or currency, who the person is whose face appears on one side, and what the building is that is represented on the reverse side.

CREATIVE WRITING PROJECTS

CHARLES F. MORELOCK

CURTISS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The following Creative Writing assignments have passed the acid test, so to speak. I use them each year, usually with success; and, in some cases, with great success. Instruct class members to:

1. Make up a play entitled "The Troublemaker," in which a student is sent to the vice principal for getting into trouble. Write the conversation between that student and the vice principal. (Students love this assignment and generally do very well. Surprisingly, their imaginary punishments are quite severe!)

2. Make up a play entitled "The Sneak," in which a teenager is told to return home by 10:30 p.m. Instead, he or she is caught sneaking into the house at 3 a.m. Write the conversation between the teenager and his or her parents.

3. Make up a play entitled "The Suicide," in which a person is about to jump from a high building for various reasons, such as romantic or financial problems or illness. Each student is to assume he or she is a person nearby who must persuade the person not to commit suicide.

4. Write an ending, or I should say build a story, around this opening sentence: "Just as John Smith was about to sit down to the dinner table, he heard a terrible scream from next door."

5. Build stories around these opening sentences:

   a. Fans, this stadium is going wild.

   b. The huge crowd gathered in the lunch area to see the wild fight.

   c. And now, a word from our sponsor.

   d. We interrupt this program to bring you a special bulletin.

6. Compile a list of questions about problems that would normally be received by a columnist such as Ann Landers or Dear Abby. Write what you consider to be appropriate advice given in response to the questions.

ALWAYS DO RIGHT

GOMER JAMES

GARDENA HIGH SCHOOL

For many years at Gardena High School, the dean of Creative Writing classes was Phil Martin, now retired. He not only published work of his own but also knew how to help others do the same. He was a master of classroom magic. His formula (borrowed from a famous creative writer) was simple: "Always do right."

This kind of advice sounds easy to follow; but, actually, it is difficult to apply. What is right? Phil seemed to know instinctively. His success with Creative Writing students was phenomenal. To this day, we open LAUSD texts; and, in the cover book plates, amid the doodling and names and epithets of students long passed, we find the name of Mr. Martin with such anonymous accolades as COOL or GOOD or RIGHT ON. Praise by high school students is not lightly given. What was his secret?

It wasn't his youth, for he was old. It wasn't his long hair, for he was glabrous. Nor was it his insistence on vocabulary building as he barked, "Glabrous, there's a word for you." The secret was somewhere else.

"You have to throw away the rule book," he said, "if you want to help kids write creatively. Creativity flourishes in freedom, not in restriction.

Get rid of the pressure, and let the scribblers blow off steam. They are lazy? Prescribe latitude as the specific for lassitude. Keep your new red pencil, yes, but not for the old reasons. Don't use it to pillory the wrong; use it to acclaim the right. Forget all that mad gibberish of awk, frag, RO, sp, ugh, thud, and squelch; but, in its place, let red benison flow. Spare the red and spoil the child," he would add with a smile. "Forget the stricture of structure, whatever that means. Eschew subservience to syntax. Water the little seeds with permissiveness, and watch the late bloomers open up in this garden of free association. A modest gesture at weeding can be done later if you really feel you must observe a convention or two. That's about it.

"And for a bountiful harvest," he would conclude with a twinkle, "Remember one thing more. Follow Mark Twain's advice, 'Always do right.' Convince your student that he or she can't write wrong, and the student will forever write right, proof of Mark Twain's wisdom and of your ability to teach Creative Writing."